



UPGRADE SPECIALIST IN ANOTHER WORLD

BOOK 05

Endless Sea Of Clouds

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

Upgrade Specialist in Another World

(异界之装备强化专家)

by

Endless Sea Of Clouds

(茫茫云海)

Synopsis

Just as a gamer found an overpowered skill book called ‘Item Upgrade’ in the hottest virtual reality role-playing game on Earth, something happened to the game’s system, causing his soul to leave his body and go to another dimension. Common sense dictates that he would be born anew then become the greatest overlord of this world by making use of his advanced knowledge. Not in this case! He was already dead. Only some fragments of his soul and that skill book managed to get into that dimension and merge with an ordinary common youngster called Bai Yunfei.

This was the enormous Tianhun continent, where humans could be said to have no limits. There was a group of humans here who could cultivate the power of their own souls then control their bodies, the natural elements and even other people’s souls with that power! These special beings were called — soul cultivators. Come witness how the several fragments of the dead inter-dimensional traveler’s soul and that skill book, which was not governed by the laws of this plane, were going to help Bai Yunfei become a legendary soul cultivator and craftsman!

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English Translation by Deceptioning @ [Wuxiaworld](#)

ePub conversion by Lisa Hayes @ [Hasseno Blog](#)

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Chapter 401: +14 and....an Anomaly! (Fifth)

“But....what exactly is a spatial blade?”

A question for the ages was asked by Bai Yunfei. He had never seen this type of effect before, and it was starting to pique his interest.

“Let’s try it out.”

Weighing the egg in his hand, he waved his hand horizontally at the cave wall.

Despite being the size of his hand, the egg could be fastened to it by using the power of the elements or released at will.

Activating the effects of any of his items was practically second nature to Bai Yunfei, so with just a thought, he activated the +13 effect of the egg.

No sooner did he mentally command the egg did he feel a portion of his soulforce be siphoned out from his body into the egg when he released it. If he had to guess, nearly 1000 points of soulforce had been used in that one instant!

At the same time, the power of an element he had never felt before began to form in front of him. Taking on the shape of a pitch-black crescent moon, it continued to grow in length as it expanded into the arc of his swing.

The egg had sliced open space itself!

He was stupefied. When the spatial blade touched the part of the cave walls it touched, the stone behind it disappeared without warning or sound. It was almost as if the stone had been devoured!

Continuing for another hundred meters, the spatial blade then petered out of sight....

For a while, Bai Yunfei didn’t know just how to respond to the

hole left behind by the spatial blade.

“This....this was the spatial blade?!” He looked down at the egg in his hand tumultuously.

“Can....can I really use this egg in a fight?!” The shivers down his spine grew even more intense at the thought.

But the +13 additional effect was really something else! Any previous notion of ‘I can’t use this in a fight’ was thrown straight out the window after he saw what it could do....

It was not only a powerful final move, but also a joke of a ‘soul armament’ that anyone would laugh their balls off.

TL Note: Untranslated pun where 蛋疼 (Lit: egg pain) is a slang meaning to be “ball breaking”.

So, how should he use this item?

He doubted he’d have the courage to pull out the egg to use in any fight....

But while Bai Yunfei was so caught up in his own troubles, he failed to notice that the egg in his left hand was starting to glow softly with several colors and the interior of the egg was starting to churn....

Bai Yunfei clenched his teeth together; what happened with the egg didn’t matter anymore. Having his mind made up, Bai Yunfei took out a white piece of stone from his ring--it was the upgrade stone he had only just found in the cave!

“Worrying about the pros and cons is only going to be a pain in the ass, I found something completely by accident, so let that be it. Even if I rewind time and didn’t find this egg or stone, it wouldn’t be too big of a waste! But if I succeed in bringing this to +14, then who cares if people will laugh at me? If a brick can be used, why not an egg?!”

Motivating himself even more, Bai Yunfei’s left and right hand

collided with one another, bringing the egg and stone together!

“Upgrade!”

A faint milky-white light emanated from the stone following his growl and enveloped the entire egg up in it shortly afterwards!

A prismatic ray of light shot out from the egg then. It was unable to escape from the milky-white layering over the egg, producing an extremely magnified burst of prismatic light!

The light show had been so blinding and sudden that even Bai Yunfei found himself blinded and nearly threw the egg away.

But then, a string of notifications began to make its way into his head, stopping him from doing anything....

Upgrade Successful

It had worked! The upgrade actually worked!!

Just the fact that the upgrade succeeded was enough to stop Bai Yunfei’s heart, but the following notifications was the real stunner.

.....

Equipment Grade: Mid Human
Elemental Affinity: Fire Wood, Wind, Lightning
Upgrade Level: +14
Attack: 360
Additional Attack: 1200
Soul Compatibility: 75%

+10 Additional Effect: 10% chance to...by 50% when attacking.
+12 Additional Effect:chance to inflict confusion for...seconds....
+13 Additional....spatial blade....
+14....

Upgrade Requirement: 75 Soulpoints

“.....”

The first few lines of notification had been rather slow in coming out, but still within normal parameters. The lines after those were definitely growing more and more distorted and hazy. What came next could only be described by Bai Yunfei as his mind suddenly going fuzzy, like the screen of a TV showing static due to a disruption in signal receiving.

The notifications were flickering non-stop, the words were warping in on itself, and then after a second, the notification screen started to crumble away....

This too, felt like deja vu to Bai Yunfei. Back when he messed up the crafting process and ended up throwing in the Cataclysmic Seal, Bai Yunfei felt his mind go haywire just like it was doing now.

Just three seconds after the notification screen mishaps, Bai Yunfei felt a multi colored beam of light attack his eyes. But with the current problem with the notifications happening, Bai Yunfei could hardly care to notice the light.

Gradually, the notifications disappeared from sight, but before he could even react to that, something even more terrifying started to happen!!

In his left hand, the egg which had been shining furiously with light until now began to absorb any residual soulforce. The surrounding soulforce in the cave was sucked into the egg, and then not even a moment later, Bai Yunfei felt his own soulforce flooding into the egg as if a dam had broke!

Before Bai Yunfei could even properly register these events in his mind, half of his soulforce was already gone to the egg!

The first conscious thought he had was to throw the egg, but to add onto the nightmare, Bai Yunfei found himself unable to even move his hands. They were stuck to the egg like glue!

“F*ck, how did this happen? Stop dammit!!”

Howling furiously to himself, Bai Yunfei tried his best to wrench his hands apart, but it was no use.

He was at a loss for what to do. This was only supposed to be a careless upgrade, so how did it become something like this?

Absolutely nothing out of the ordinary happened before when he upgraded the egg when he expected it to, but now when he was convinced nothing special really would happen, it did!

How was he supposed to react to that?

And after several attempts to pull his hands away, a great deal of his soulforce was already taken away!

“Calm down! Just calm down!”

He bit his tongue in a forceful attempt to calm himself down. There wasn't any time to waste on frivolous thoughts or try to throw away the egg, so he abandoned that course of action.

With a mental command, the essence fireseed in him began to quiver as a tremendous amount of elemental fire began to join with his soulforce to enter the egg!

If he couldn't throw the egg away, he'd have to break it!

He expected to see the elemental fire to smash into the egg and break it to bits. What he didn't expect to see was the elemental fire to flow into the egg along with the soulforce and be absorbed!

To say he was completely scared beyond his wits would be an understatement!

And so, it was then that Bai Yunfei was horrified to find out the egg was not only absorbing soulforce, but the elemental fire in him!

Not even ten seconds had transpired from start to finish before Bai Yunfei felt his soulforce practically zero. Even his essence fireseed was starting to wane in strength!

“Thump...”

Meanwhile, while Bai Yunfei was filled with despair in this conundrum, the sound of something else made itself known to his ears....

Chapter 402: Hatching and Regressing! (Sixth)

The egg was a bottomless pit. No matter how much soulforce it absorbed, it didn't seem to have any intentions of stopping. Bai Yunfei was a late-stage Soul Ancestor, and his soulforce was much higher than the average one, yet it barely took ten seconds to drain him completely dry of both soulforce and elemental fire!

The lack of soulforce resulted in the warning signs of blacking out, and the absorption of elemental fire meant the coming instability of the essence fireseed!

Unlike soulforce which could be recovered, losing all of one's elemental fire meant the debilitation of one's capability to be a soul cultivator!

Not even a single thought was to be had for Bai Yunfei to respond to this situation. All he knew was that his soulsense was rapidly dimming, and his own vision fading away starting from the corners.

Knowing not what he should do, despair filled at the very center of Bai Yunfei's mind and heart....

“Th-thump....”

Another pecking sound was heard in his ears—

No.

Saying that he could hear it in his ears would be wrong.

He was hearing it straight in his mind!

“Th-thump, th-thump....”

It came again. If Bai Yunfei wasn't hearing things, then the sound was becoming more clear, and louder!

A bizarre sound was happening simultaneously inside his head.

It felt a little....familial. Like if the sound was ‘connected’ to him in a way he didn’t understand.

“Crack....”

Another sound he hadn’t heard before, but this time, it occurred in the real world rather than in his head.

Like the switch for everything to break loose, the sound he heard was the start for Bai Yunfei’s entire body to suddenly lose any semblance of force on it. Even the suction force he had been feeling earlier from the egg disappeared without any prior warnings!

The sudden change in his body was startling to say the least. Not even aware that he had dropped the egg, Bai Yunfei stumbled backwards, his head still unsure of what was going on.

It took ten or so steps for his back to touch the wall, but even then, Bai Yunfei felt himself unsteady and slumped to the ground with a heavy thud!

A few ways away, the egg thumped on the ground at the same time he did.

“Cerrrack....”

The sound of something cracking into pieces was heard next.

This was the sound of an egg being broken from the inside out!

For the first time in seemingly forever, clarity hit Bai Yunfei. Since he was still without strength, he could only stare out in front of him in disbelief. “Thi—wha? How’s this happening!!”

His mind was filled with disbelief, but the proof of what was going on was evident in his eyes.

There was ‘life’ being born into the world just a few steps away from him!

This wasn’t told to him by his soulsense, but rather some sort of other signal that made itself known to his consciousness and mind. A multicolored light was starting to take form in the shape of an

ovalish egg. A red beak was poking its way out of the egg and making even bigger cracks of it.

Eventually, a small head poked through, and then, its wings....

“Chirp chirp....”

A faint cry from the creature snapped Bai Yunfei awake. Stunned, his head beckoned downwards to look at it. The multicolored light that had previously been burning away at his eyes was already petered away to levels just barely visible from behind the egg shells.

And at the very center of the egg, a small but colorful bird-shape figure was shivering just slightly in it.....

At an estimation, the bird was roughly the size of two fists put together. Its plumage was the color of the rainbow, and little claws hung at the bottom of its feet. Its tiny head shook side to side softly, as if it was feeling muddle-headed.

It let out a shrill chirp once before spreading its wings out. With a tentative claw on the ground, it tried to take a step away from its egg.

When it noticed Bai Yunfei, the bird lifted its head to look at him with eyes filled with innocence found only in a newborn.

“Chirp chirp....”

For two seconds, Bai Yunfei and the soulbeast stared at one another. Then, when the bird let loose an excited chirp, it teetered towards Bai Yunfei!

Completely caught off guard by the third chirp, Bai Yunfei found himself instinctively trying to move backwards.

For some reason, the things that were happening in front of him was scaring him.

“D-don’t come over, or I-I’ll....” He stammered incoherently.

He originally wanted to say ,’or I’ll scream’, but that didn’t seem

quite right, and neither did ‘or I won’t take it easy on you’. The latter especially felt extremely wrong to say to a little bird of all things, so he chose to stay quiet instead.

The longer Bai Yunfei failed to say or do something, the more the bird was able to move smoothly over to where he was. Soon, it was able to cross the two meters over to Bai Yunfei and leapt onto his thigh to embrace him while he was motionless....

“Chirp chirp!!”

The soft feathers on the head of the bird tickled at Bai Yunfei’s chest. Chirping twice, it fluffed its wings and stared innocently at him.

Somehow, Bai Yunfei had the feeling that the looks the little bird was giving him were of ‘happiness’....

.....

A soft red gleam of light emanated from within the cave as elemental fire manifested into the cave to be absorbed into Bai Yunfei’s body.

He was in the middle of recovering his soulforce and elemental fire. Due to the unexpected mishaps a while ago, both his tanks were basically empty and would require some time for them both to fully recover.

A small ball of fluff was curled on top of his right leg. Identified as a baby prisma oriole by Bai Yunfei, the bird looked as though it was sleeping with it being curled up and its eyes being closed.

But in actuality, it was also absorbing some of the elemental fire along with Bai Yunfei!

A while later, the elemental fire in the cave fluctuated by a tiny amount before being fully absorbed into Bai Yunfei’s body.

Sighing as he felt the last wisp of it enter him, Bai Yunfei slowly opened his eyes.

Rather than relief, only depression existed in them.

“Is there really no way to recover my strength right now? I was so close to breaking through....” Bai Yunfei sighed to himself. “I came to the forest to make progress, not regress!”

Bai Yunfei’s strength had been negatively affected by the recent events, dropping him from a late-stage Soul Ancestor on the verge of breaking through to just a late-stage Soul Ancestor!

From standing at the peak of a mountain to falling down to near the top of it!

The average soul cultivator would’ve blown their stack should this happen to them, since it’d require several years of work in order to regain what they had lost. Luckily, Bai Yunfei was far more calm-headed than other soul cultivators, since he had several available resources, such as the Equipment Upgrade Technique, the Cultivation Pendant, and the Dual Flame Arts in order to help him train back to his original state.

But still.

Depression couldn’t be helped. He’d been training the Soulbeast Forest for so long for so hard already. To regress after all of that was painful, and the fact that it happened because of some sort of mysterious circumstance made him feel all the more terrible.

It felt like he was serving out a punishment for a crime he was innocent of.

“Eh?”

Just then, Bai Yunfei felt movement from the small ball of fluff on his leg.

The bird was starting to wake....

Chapter 403: You Have to Be Amazing, Right Xiao Qi?!! (Seventh)

Bai Yunfei sat crossed-legged against the walls of the cave. His arms were crossed together to sit against his chest, and his eyes were shut tight as if thinking about something.

“Chirp....chirp...chirp chirp....”

A small multi-colored bird hopped around to and fro, chirping rhythmically as if singing a song.

This was the very same little prismatic birdling that was hatched just a while ago.

Despite being hatched for less than even a day, it was roughly at the same developmental stage as any other bird a month after birth. Its feathers were out in full force and vibrant in color, and it was already showing a great deal of curiosity in the world it was in already. Hopping this way and that, the bird would chirp and peck at the small holes adorning the cave as if to make play.

But it never went beyond three meters away from Bai Yunfei.

“Ugh....I still don’t get it!”

Exasperation escaped from Bai Yunfei’s lips. Even after thinking for so long, he was unable to grasp the reasons behind the hatching of the prismatic oriole.

“Was it because I upgraded it to +14? Or was it because I used the upgrade stone? Or is it because of the nature of the equipment?”

Any possible factor that could’ve resulted in this strange scenario was taken into consideration, but not a single answer could be had.

Countless equipment had been upgraded by Bai Yunfei ever since he first obtained the technique years ago. But even with all of the experience he’d accumulated up to now, it was only limited to lower tier equipment that were +13 at most, and even then, he was

still lacking in experience when it came to using the upgrade stone.

So in other words, he was completely in the dark right now.

If he had to make a wager though, he'd say that it'd have to do with the very nature of the item itself.

It was unordinary one, so it stood to reason upgrading an unordinary item would lead to extraordinary results.

And the fact that there was a very healthy prisma oriole jumping about in front of him served as evidence to that line of thought.

“The....the egg was definitely dead, but a soulbeast hatched out from it! How does something like that even happen?” Pondered Bai Yunfei, “Did it come back to life somehow?!”

Strange was the inference he came to, but the more he thought about it, the more everything made sense....

An egg that had lost its chance to give life, yet able to be upgraded like any other equipment. And what followed after that was a ‘resurrection’ of life within the egg. It was possibly due to being caused by the upgrade stone, or because it was +14, or even another factor unknown to Bai Yunfei.

Whatever the case, the egg was no longer a piece of equipment, or even an egg anymore.

The absorption of his soulforce and elemental fire may as well have been the factors that led to the soulbeast egg coming coming back to life and hatching a soulbeast into the world.

“In the end....did the upgrade really succeed?” Bai Yunfei gloomed, “If it did....where is my +14 equipment then?!”

No matter how dissatisfied he felt about the egg, losing the egg just like that was even more hurtful to him.

“It was +14!! A +14 piece of equipment! I never even got to see the +14 effect....”

Sobbing at the loss of such a chance, Bai Yunfei continued to cry

to himself in despair, “My +14 equipment....my +14 equipment, my +14 soulbeast egg, my egg, my....”

“Chirp chirp!!”

At some point when he was musing to himself, a chirp snapped him out from his thoughts. When he looked up, he saw the little prisma oriole tilting its head to look at him from its perch on his leg.

“Hold on...!!”

A thought suddenly struck Bai Yunfei, “Just hold on! You just came out from that egg didn’t you? And didn’t you absorb all of my soulforce in order to hatch yourself? Doesn’t that mean you should be super powerful?!”

The possibility of it being strong sparked renewed interest in Bai Yunfei. Taking the bird onto his hand, he stared expectantly at it.

“Chirp chirp?”

Strangely, the bird didn’t seem be at all frightened. Standing on top of his palm, it continued to stare quizzically at Bai Yunfei, as if excited by his attention onto it.

Thinking about the bird, he lifted a finger to touch at the bird’s head and began to inspect the soulforce in its body.

A moment later, the excitement on Bai Yunfei’s face waned in disappointment. “Mid-stage class one, and nothing special about it either. I can’t sense any hidden power, or any ‘inherited’ additional effects...”

He tried again with the Upgrade Technique, but there was no reaction--though that was to be expected.

It was a living bird now, how could it have any ‘stats’?

“Hey, little bird, are you really just an ordinary prisma oriole?” Bai Yunfei spoke, “Your hatching was really cool, so you should have something special about you, right?”

The bird tilted its head again quizzically. Chirping in response to the ‘question’, it flew up to his forehead and began to peck softly at it....

“Tch, be serious!” Bai Yunfei spoke, “You destroyed the only +14 equipment I had and plummeted my strength back down to such a dismal level! If you’re only an ordinary prisma oriole that can’t even break through the class six level, shouldn’t you feel a little embarrassed?”

“Come on then! Let me see what hidden strength you have!”

Seemingly vexed by not having his expectations met, Bai Yunfei tossed the bird away towards the nearby cave wall!

“Show me your true power!”

“Pow!”

Sailing through the cave, the bird hadn’t even the time to spread its wings before slamming into the opposing wall. It stuck to the walls for two seconds before sliding down, leaving behind a bird-shaped hole from the impact....

“Uh....”

With a sweatdrop on his face, Bai Yunfei watched as the bird struggle back to its feet. It shook its wings free of dirt and then gave him a look of anger....

“Well...er....sorry about that, I didn’t mean to do that....”

He felt a little foolish saying that, but he bowed his head to apologize to the bird.

Somehow, the bird didn’t seem to mind too much. Right after Bai Yunfei apologized, the resentment in the bird’s eyes vanished straight away.

And after that, it began to chirp and hop happily back to Bai Yunfei’s side.

“Well now....”

It's magnanimous attitude towards himself was surprising to say the least, but it sparked the beginnings of a bond between and the bird.

As it hopped to him, Bai Yunfei extended a hand down, and without another word, he allowed for the bird to leap onto his arm, only to be surprised when it leapt onto his shoulder.

“You want to come with me, little one?” He smiled.

“Chirrrppp~”

Even more surprising was how the bird replied to him. If Bai Yunfei didn't know any better, he would've thought that it was replying affirmatively to him with its swings spread out wide.

“Hm....since you can't be my contracted soulbeast partner, I'll let you follow me for the time being.”

Despite being only a normal prisma oriole, Bai Yunfei didn't feel too unhappy about a soulbeast following him. Having a little pet like this wasn't all too bad, and if it wanted to leave after it matured, then so be it.

“Let's give you a name then!” Bai Yunfei smiled.

“A prisma oriole has seven colors....so let's call you Xiao Qi!”

TL Note: Xiao meaning 'little' and Qi meaning 'seven'.

Chapter 404: Xiao Qi Powering Through the Levels, Through the Night! (Eighth)

“Chirp chirp~!!”

In yet another seemingly responsive answer to Bai Yunfei’s name for it, the bird opened its wings wide and flew up into the air!!

It’s sudden ascent into the air scared Bai Yunfei, but he could tell that it was clearly overjoyed. From how it was flying around him, the bird seemed as though it was trying to say, “Look, look! I can fly!”

“Haha....” For the first time in a while, Bai Yunfei smiled.

Soon, Xiao Qi came back to roost on Bai Yunfei’s right shoulder, having tired itself out. Chirping twice when it landed, the bird began to groom itself.

The two had only met each other for a short while now, but Bai Yunfei felt a great deal of intimacy with it, but why he felt the way he did was unknown to him.

He looked outside of the cave—it was dark now.

Almost an entire day had passed in the cave!

Bai Yunfei stretched his back with a sigh, “Forget it then. I’ll spend the night here! Today has been far too much, so I’ll be taking a nice nap tonight!”

What he experienced today in the cave had been far more taxing on his mind than any fight with a class six soulbeast thus far. Sleeping tonight would be without a doubt a great way to recover, so that was what he intended to do.

Out of all the soul cultivators, he was probably the only who who enjoyed ‘sleeping’ just for the sake of sleeping.

Eyes scanning the cave, Bai Yunfei found himself staring at the

giant nest at the center. “Xiao Qi,” he spoke to the bird, “this used to be your nest, mind if I borrow it?”

He moved without even waiting for Xiao Qi’s response and laid down onto the nest. The nest had no stink as one might expect from one, and it was rather comfortable to rest upon, much to Bai Yunfei’s satisfaction. Getting comfortable, he placed his hands behind his head and slowly drifted off to sleep.

Xiao Qi circled around Bai Yunfei’s head twice before finally descending down to his right to curl up next to him. Resting its head to its waist to get comfortable, the bird followed Bai Yunfei and fell asleep.

.....

Hour by hour, time slowly trickled by inside the cave. On the outside, the night sky was still bright as ever, and the moonlight forest was silently calm, aside from the occasional roar from a soulbeast.

But not a single one of them came to the cave.

In the cave, a bird and man was sleeping together, one of the two undergoing a strange change....

And the one that was changing was....Xiao Qi!

Both of the cave’s inhabitants were asleep, but the prisma oriole was glowing from its roost next to Bai Yunfei. The light shined softly from its feathers, and despite being so close to Bai Yunfei’s eyes, they were not so bright so as to be painful.

Rather, it was a soothing glow, like something from a dream. It enveloped the area around them, filling the entire nest with that peaceful glow....

Furthermore, not even a single wisp of soulforce was to be felt here. If one had to make a comparison, then it’d be as if Xiao Qi had turned into a multi-colored lantern that emitted only light, not soulforce or elemental power. It had—for lack of a better word

—mysteriously started to glow, but nothing else was happening on the surface.

And since soulforce wasn't being used, Bai Yunfei wouldn't be roused from his sleep.

Illuminated by the soft glows of Xiao Qi, Bai Yunfei slept peacefully. Everything was all right in the world....

But in Xiao Qi's body, an unknown change was beginning to take place....

.....

The morning after, when the first rays of the sun hadn't even touched upon the small mountain the cave was in, Bai Yunfei was already starting to wake.

"Ah....." Refreshed and renewed, Bai Yunfei stretched his body. "That feels great....I haven't slept that well in forever."

With a hop, Bai Yunfei leapt up to his feet and opened his eyes just in time to hear the sound of something hitting the ground.

It took a moment for Bai Yunfei to realize that something had been pressing on him when he slept, and when he stood up, that 'something' had been thrown to the side!

"Chirp chirp..."

It took a moment for Bai Yunfei to think of the chirping, and when he finally remembered, he smiled. "Ah, Xiao Qi. What brings you running to me? Did you sle—"

His head was already turning to greet the bird while he spoke, but then when he saw Xiao Qi, his mouth froze mid-speech, and his eyes froze in absolute shock, as if he had just seen a ghost.

"Wh—who are you?!"

He spoke after two seconds of silence.

Not too far away, a brightly-colored figure was climbing back to

its feet and dusting itself off while looking back at Bai Yunfei.

It was the prisma oriole.....but! It was bigger than before!!

What stood in front of Bai Yunfei now was a grown up prisma oriole!

Xiao Qi was now the same size of a rooster, and its feathers had a glossy sheen to them. Its feet had sharp claws now, and its head had several shinier feathers even.

It looked exactly the same as the prisma oriole Bai Yunfei watched fight the greenwood wolf yesterday!!

“Chirp chirp~?”

Perplexed by Bai Yunfei’s reaction, the bird looked down at itself as well, only to let out a startled squawk when it realized the change. It hopped up and down where it stood and even started to shake its body a bit.

Then, a soft glow started to glow from beneath its feathers. The glow persisted for a moment before Xiao Qi found itself shrinking in size back to the palm-sized bird it was once before!

Back to its original size, the bird chirped twice in satisfaction and flew back to Bai Yunfei’s shoulder.

Bai Yunfei stared at the bird as it landed. Holding his hand up for the bird to leap on next, he raised it to his eye to look.

“Are you really Xiao Qi?” He asked.

“Chirp chirp~!” It replied in affirmation.

“But...but....” Bai Yunfei couldn’t help but doubt the answer, “Your strength....it’s impossible!!”

Bai Yunfei’s disbelief wasn’t without reason! Not only was Xiao Qi capable of changing its size, it was now.... A lot stronger than before!

It was a late-stage class four now!

Chapter 405: Crafting! (Ninth)

“You were only a mid-stage class one soulbeast yesterday, how’d you become a late-stage class four overnight?! And how come I didn’t sense that?!”

The fact that this happened without his notice dumbfounded Bai Yunfei with how out-of-the-blue it was.

But the proof was standing right there in front of him.

He scanned the cave for anything that might’ve caused this change, but there was nothing to be found, and nothing strange was going on in Xiao Qi’s body.

Had Bai Yunfei not known about yesterday’s events, he would’ve thought Xiao Qi had always been an adult prisma oriole.

“Tsk tsk! So, Xiao Qi, you really are a special prisma oriole!” Having not a good reason for this change, Bai Yunfei gave up thinking about it to scratch Xiao Qi on the head in praise.

“Chirp chirp~!” Just like ever, Xiao Qi cooed twice. Spreading its wings, it took off into the air to fly again, though this time it looked like it wanted to fly out of the cave. However, since Bai Yunfei didn’t move from his spot, Xiao Qi remained in the cave as well.

As Xiao Qi flew, Bai Yunfei dusted the hay off his shoulders and stretched his body. “Well then, now that I’m fully rested, it’s time to continue my adventure!”

But before Bai Yunfei could take even two steps towards the cave exit, a cry from Xiao Qi from behind stopped him.

“Eh?”

Turning around, Bai Yunfei saw Xiao Qi stand behind him, chirping and hopping around a part of the nest as if unwilling to leave.

At a loss for why Xiao Qi was acting this way, Bai Yunfei squatted down next to the nest. “What’s wrong? Did you want to take this with you as a commemoration?”

What Xiao Qi was hopping around wasn’t the nest in particular, but the shells of the egg it hatched from.

The eggshells weren’t at all big; the largest pieces of them being the two ends of the egg, while the rest of the eggshells were sprinkled about here and there on the ground.

Each of the shell pieces were still glowing softly with a prismatic light.

Bai Yunfei had taken a look at the eggshells a while ago to see if there’d be any notifications, but there was none. The Upgrade Technique no longer considered the eggshells to be ‘equipment’. Without there being any special energy, there was nothing else remarkable about it besides it being as hard as steel.

“Are you saying the eggshells are important?” Feeling that Xiao Qi wanted to keep these eggshells not for sentimentality, but for another reason, Bai Yunfei asked again.

“Chirp chirp chirp~!”

The oriole hopped up and down several times in a positive response.

“Hm....”

Its answer mystified Bai Yunfei even more. He didn’t know why, but he trusted the ‘information’ he was getting from the bird. So if the bird said that the eggshells had some sort of use, then so be it.

“But what can it be used for??” He held a piece of the shell up to examine.

Then, an idea struck him.

“To craft, maybe?!”

He hadn’t the foggiest how this idea came to him, but now that it

did, he was excited. Forget about adventure, it was time to craft!!

“Crafting.....crafting.....should I use this to craft a soul armament?” It was a little bizarre to even think about using the colorful egg shells to craft a soul armament, but he couldn’t help but feel the urge to try it out anyways.

He came to a decision nearly instantaneously, “Let’s try it!! Won’t hurt me if it fails anyhow.”

He’d make a soul armament with these eggshells!

Now that his mind was set to the task, Bai Yunfei didn’t hesitate to gather up all the eggshells. Stacking them neatly in a pile in front of him, Bai Yunfei waved his hand to bring out a giant-sized red object.

The Lightningfire Cauldron

Lightningfire Cauldron’s stats:

Unique Equipment
Equipment Grade: Low Heaven Elemental Affinity: Fire, Lightning Upgrade Level: +10 Special Effect 1: Increase chance of success when crafting by 300% Special Effect 2: 15% chance to add lightning affinity to an item when crafting. +10 Additional Effect: 10% chance to boost the overall stats of an equipment by 20% when crafting. Soul Compatibility: 13% Upgrade Requirement: 110 Soulpoints

“Haven’t crafted in a long time....” Bai Yunfei sighed as he basked in the rich flow of elemental fire coming from the cauldron. It’s soul compatibility with him had increased by 3% ever since he first received it.

“Well now, what shall I craft?” He rubbed his chin. “Making a dagger would be pretty hard with the amount of materials here, should I make a flying dagger then? Doesn’t feel right though, maybe some...accessories!

“A bracelet, that’ll work!!”

Now that he had an idea of what type of equipment to craft, Bai Yunfei began the preparations. Using eggshells as the primary material was a first; he didn’t know if it’d succeed, but if it did, then it’d be a valuable learning experience.

Carefully calculating the volume of eggshells he had and the other necessary subsidiary materials, Bai Yunfei finished up the meticulous other preliminary steps. Standing in front of the cauldron, Bai Yunfei breathed in deeply. “Well then.....let’s begin!”

His left hand pressed against the cauldron, and the Cataclysmic Seal popped out from the Violet Soul Ring on his right hand. Hovering in midair, the brick shivered for a moment before Bai Yunfei’s second essence fireseed appeared!!

No sooner did it appear did it get ‘sucked’ into the middle of the cauldron!

Several crackling sounds were heard from the cauldron as a connection opened up between cauldron and fireseed, and then, the fireseed was promptly taken into the cauldron’s bottom!

The cauldron shook violently when the second fireseed was deposited into it. Flashes of red light flowed out from the cauldron, and then from the inside, a roaring fire sprung to life!

This was a crafting technique unique only to Bai Yunfei--using the essence fireseed to manipulate and control fire!

He had learned this method from the predecessor and creator of the Dual Flame Arts. In it, it was said that the predecessor used his companion fireseed, but Bai Yunfei was able to take that concept a step further by using an actual fireseed!

Through this special usage of the fireseed, Bai Yunfei was able to increase his chances of success when crafting several times over!

Only someone with two essence fireseeds could pull this off.

Which meant no one else but Bai Yunfei could do this!

Everything else about the world disappeared into the smoke as the fire rose. All there was was the cauldron in front of him, and the fire within it. The shattered pieces of the egg floated into the cauldron when he waved his hand, and so began the process to craft an item with them.

Somehow knowing that Bai Yunfei needed time to himself, Xiao Qi flew up to a protruding stone on the cave wall to watch. Without even a chirp, it stood there, observing what Bai Yunfei did.

Again and again, the flames within the cauldron danced. With each new material introduced to the cauldron, the flames danced without rhyme, but there was control in how Bai Yunfei did his work. Experienced in the art of crafting, Bai Yunfei was confident in his ability to craft without a problem.

There was a huge difference on how accessories were crafted compared to weapons and armor. If proper care wasn't had, then the product would turn out to be defected.

What it meant to have a defective good meant having an item without any special attributes, or using high grade materials to create an ordinary accessory.

Even if one succeeded, there was also the chance that there wasn't many attributes added, or the end result wasn't equivalent to the grade of the materials. In both cases, the end product was a waste.

So when Bai Yunfei decided to craft an accessory, it was meant to be a challenge if he excluded the fact that he was using eggshells as a material.

Time trickled by bit by bit. Crafting high quality products required both time and patience, and Bai Yunfei was no stranger to that. Calm as ever, he focused at the task at hand to control the flames.

From sunrise to sunset, the day was already turning back into night....

A flash of red light illuminated the entirety of the cave, brightening up not only the entire interior of the place, but Bai Yunfei's face.

“It's done!!”

Chapter 406: The Unique Equipment, the Beast Taming Ring! (Tenth)

There was a strong flash of light from the cauldron before the fire in it was extinguished. Bai Yunfei’s second fireseed soon came flying out with a multicolored bracelet.

The second fireseed melted back into the Cataclysmic Seal, and the bracelet fell safely onto Bai Yunfei’s hand.

Now that he had the finished product in his hand, Bai Yunfei couldn’t help but look at the stats straight away.

Unique Equipment
Equipment Grade: Mid Earth
Elemental Affinity: None
Pet Loyalty +50
Soul Compatibility: 20%
Upgrade Requirement: 100 Soulpoints

Straight away, a string of notifications popped up in Bai Yunfei’s mind, but the contents of the notifications surprised him greatly!

“Unique, mid earth, pet loyalty, and 20% soul compatibility!!”

Each line of the notification brought Bai Yunfei’s eyebrow higher and higher. He had no words to describe how he felt about the bracelet.

He expected an ordinary bracelet with ordinary effects, not a unique piece of equipment with very rare stats!

Making a low-earth tier soul armament would’ve been good enough for him, but this one surpassed his expectations by being a mid-earth!

Not to mention he had never seen one of the attributes before!

Furthermore, it was very surprising to see that the soul compatibility was already at 20%!

And so, Bai Yunfei was at a loss for words for a very long time. Even with repeated looks at the stats of the bracelet, he didn't know what to say.

“Jackpot! I've hit the jackpot!” He finally managed to say, “It was so worth it to craft! Using throwaway materials to craft a unique set of equipment, what a deal! I've never seen this stat before!

“Pet loyalty....pet loyalty....” Bai Yunfei muttered to himself, “Is it something a soulbeast should wear then?”

‘Loyalty’ is a relatively easy concept to explain. The degree of loyalty would differ from soulbeast and soul cultivators, and if the soul cultivator didn't treat the soulbeast well, then loyalty would drop. While ultimately, the soul contract binded the soulbeast to the soul cultivator, loyalty served as a major influence on how the soulbeast would act.

“If I let a soulbeast wear this, does this mean it'll be more loyal to me?” Mused Bai Yunfei, “How much is 50 points of loyalty? Is that a lot? How about 100? Does it only work if a soulbeast wears it?”

The question remained on his mind as he stored away the cauldron. Having no answer to it, he decided to turn around to look at Xiao Qi.

“Come here, Xiao Qi.” The way Bai Yunfei beckoned a finger was eerily similar to how a creepy old man might beckon to a child.

“Chirp chirp~!” Came a naive chirp. Seeing that Bai Yunfei was done, the bird wasted no time in flying to the outstretched hand of his.

“Try wearing this, Xiao Qi.”

Pushing some soulforce into the bracelet, Bai Yunfei watched as the bracelet in his left hand start to shrink in size!!

By adding in a morphing stone during the crafting process, it was possible to change the size of the product by a certain amount.

In the blink of an eye, the bracelet turned into the size of a ping pong ball. While Xiao Qi remained faithfully still, Bai Yunfei slowly eased the bracelet onto its neck. With how multicolored the bracelet was, it looked quite nice on Xiao Qi.

Appearance didn't matter much to Bai Yunfei. All he cared about was experimenting with the stats. Though to his amazement, there didn't seem to be any change when Xiao Qi wore it.

But from the faint connection he felt with the bracelet, he knew that it was still operating like any other soul armament he owned, meaning that it was ready to be used...

“Strange....is this not how you're supposed to use it?” He picked the bracelet back up and restore it to its original size to inspect it.

A new attribute required time to study and learn about. Experimenting or finding out any new effects of a soul armament was one of Bai Yunfei's great pleasures, so him not finding an answer yet didn't bother him.

Xiao Qi said nothing, and stared quizzically as always at Bai Yunfei. Flying back to the nest, it folded its wings back up to prepare to sleep. After watching Bai Yunfei craft the entire day, it found itself slightly tired.

“Let's try upgrading it! Who knows if a new effect will appear, I can experiment it more then!

“Upgrade!”

.....

A moment later.

Upgrade Successful
Unique Equipment

Equipment Grade: Mid Earth
Elemental Affinity: None
Upgrade Level: +10
Pet Loyalty +50
Additional Attribute: +25 Pet Loyalty
Soul Compatibility: 60%

+10 Additional Effect: Gain the ability to control the soulbeast wearing this item.
Success rate is dependent on the difference in mental strength between user and target.
Upgrade Requirement: 100 Soulpoints

Once again, Bai Yunfei was surprised to see the item after it was upgraded to +10.

There was another effect he had never seen before!

And what other emotion was to be expected after that but joy!

“The soul compatibility is at 60%! That’s at the level of a soulbound armament!”

The more intimate feeling he was getting from the bracelet was confirming his line of thought. “And.....another powerful additional effect!”

The additional effect of this equipment was practically deviant in nature! The ability to control soulbeasts, that....that was....

“It’s a little similar to how the Beast Taming School works....” Bai Yunfei thought. “But it shouldn’t be as cruel as how they do things. It only works when it’s worn right? And without the effect, the soulbeast goes back to normal. This....this is a miracle for soulbeasts!

“But still. I wonder if this’ll be alright....it should be, right?”

For some reason, a grim smile was on his face. “In this case....ugh....

“Was it because I used the +14 egg to craft this bracelet that the

soul compatibility reached 60%?”

The soul compatibility was abnormally high for what it should've been, so Bai Yunfei couldn't help but guess at the reason why.

“Never thought that I'd be able to get yet another soulbound armament! It's a strong one too; coming into this cave was pretty damn worth it!”

Obtaining this new soul armament was more than enough to clear away the feelings of sadness he felt from losing the +14 egg. Just looking at the bracelet was enough to make him pleased. “If this is a soulbound armament, I should give it a name. A bracelet or ring that can control soulbeasts....

“I've got it! Since there's a precedence, I'll call it, the Beast Taming Ring!!”

Done with naming the ring, Bai Yunfei decided to look outside the cave. “Another day's gone already, guess I'll spend the night here again.” he sighed.

Plenty of concentration was used balancing the high grade materials together to craft the soul armament, so Bai Yunfei was more tired than usual. Stretching his back, he laid down next to Xiao Qi and slowly drifted to sleep.

.....

“Ssss....sssss....”

In the darkness of the night, where the forest was outside the cave, a slithering sound made itself known somewhere in there. A pair of blue eyes stared adamantly at the cave a few hundred meters away, and a low grumble was heard from it....

Chapter 407: Blue-eyes Wyrn

On the eve of the sunset when the world was still dim in light, Bai Yunfei's eyes flew open without warning.

Rising slowly to his feet, he looked around the perimeter of the cave, "It's not even bright out yet, geez....Couldn't you have waited two more hours or something? I was having a nice nap...." he grumbled.

He spoke to no one in particular. Dusting the hay off himself with a sigh, Bai Yunfei slowly walked outside.

Because Bai Yunfei woke up, Xiao Qi found itself waking up as well. Still groggy, the bird was unsure what Bai Yunfei was doing, but before long, it shook itself once and flew after him.

The bird reached Bai Yunfei as he stood at the entrance, taking in the sea of trees in front of him with a calm eye. The skies were still abundant with the stars and the moon, but only bright enough to illuminate just a little bit of the trees all around. Where some parts of the forest was sparse in trees, several other forms of plant life could be seen, but aside from that, there wasn't anything else visible to the naked eye.

When Bai Yunfei strode out from the cave, he was intentionally looking at a specific part of the forest fifty meters towards the right. In that area, the trees were roughly ten meters high and was quite dense in plant life. Bai Yunfei smiled at the sight, "I know you're there, stop hiding and come on out!"

He didn't yell, but his voice was audible to anyone within three hundred meters of him. But despite that, there was no movement to be seen.

Xiao Qi stared inquisitively at Bai Yunfei as if to try and guess what he was doing.

"I felt your presence already; you think yourself stronger than

me and want to eat me? I know you were paying attention to the fight between the greenwood wolf and the prisma oriole three days ago, were you planning to take a part of the spoils yourself?” Bai Yunfei quipped, as if trying to make conversation with someone. When there was no response to be had, he felt a tinge of boredom in him start to stir, “Is talking to soulbeasts with little rationality really impossible?”

“I told you to stop hiding and come on out!”

This time, rather than wait silently, Bai Yunfei threw a fireball formed by his Ardent Sun Glove at the spot he was looking at!

“Whoosh!” The fireball whizzed through the air and into the spot behind the trees. Exploding when it hit the ground, the fireball soon set anything within a twenty meter radius on fire!

“Roarr!!!”

From the blaze, a furious roar exploded outwards following a large burst of soulforce. In a flash of blue light, a gigantic figure dashed out into Bai Yunfei’s eyesight!

Now the figure was in Bai Yunfei’s line of sight, he could tell just what kind of soulbeast it was. The soulbeast stood about ten meters tall, had a huge head with sharp teeth, and a long neck. Further down its body was two bulky limbs, and at the front of the body was two comparatively shorter limbs. All four of its appendages were equipped with sharp claws, and the glint off the extremities gave Bai Yunfei no doubt that they’d be able to tear through stone and rock without a problem if the soulbeast wanted to. At the very end of its body, a thick tail smashed through a tree thick enough for three adult humans to barely wrap their arms around. (Please imagine a soulbeast similar to a T. Rex)

A light blue as the ocean rippled across its body, protecting it from the intense flames that assaulted it and quickly extinguishing the fires!

“A water type eh?” Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows rose slightly on his face. “An early-stage class six blue-eyes wyrm. That’s a rare one, didn’t think I’d see one here.”

“Roarr!” Again, the blue-eyes wyrm howled, angered by the look of contempt coming from Bai Yunfei. Its aquamarine eyes gave him the death stare as it charged its body up with blue light. As it charged up, all of the elemental water in the surrounding vicinity started to congregate in front of it in the form of a screen of water.

In the second after it formed, countless of darts made of elemental water started fly at Bai Yunfei!

The amount of projectiles coming at him didn’t seem to faze Bai Yunfei. The Violet Soul Ring on his right hand twinkled with light once before the Cataclysmic Seal appeared in a burst of orange light to erect a barrier in front of him.

“Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang....”

A series of water darts slammed into the barrier, but not one made its way through it. The barrier held strong, with only several ripples to be seen on the barrier, but the parts of the cliff wall that wasn’t protected by the barrier was immediately perforated by the darts!

“You’ve good timing, let me use you to test the Beast Taming Ring!” Eyes glowing with excitement, Bai Yunfei took out the item and fed soulforce into it. When it started to glow with all the colors of the rainbow, and when the attack on him ended, he threw the object towards the blue-eyes wyrm!

Almost expertly, the ring expanded to two meters in circumference and flew through the air straight and true towards the wyrm’s head!

“Roar!!”

It was only natural for the wyrm to react to an object being thrown at it. The blue light surrounding its body flickered briefly

as it swung its tail forward. At the very tip of it, a bright blue ‘whip’ extended outwards to smash into the Beast Taming Ring!

“Pow!!” The ring was struck mid-air, causing Bai Yunfei to narrow his eyes and raise his hand into the air. As if summoned by a mysterious force, the ring flew back to his hand.

“Obviously, a soulbeast wouldn’t let the Beast Taming Ring placed on it without a fight, that’ll be a problem....” Bai Yunfei muttered, “Then I’ll beat it first and then have it wear it!”

“Xiao Qi, go back into the cave.” He spoke to Xiao Qi.

After the bird retreated into the cave, Bai Yunfei turned back to the wyrm. At his command, the Cataclysmic Seal released the fireseed in it and had it enter his chest....

Dual Flame Arts, ‘Coil’ form activate!!

In a second, Bai Yunfei’s strength exploded in strength. Despite losing some strength from his mishap with Xiao Qi, Bai Yunfei was still a late-stage Soul Ancestor in strength. After entering the ‘coil’ form, he could force himself to reach the early-stage Soul Exalt level. And overall, he was still strong enough to deal with the blue-eyes wyrm without much difficulty.

His feet dug into the ground, allowing him to build up enough momentum to fly straight for the wyrm like an arrow shot out from a bow.

His forward advancement was met with a mighty tail whip from the wyrm. Unphased by the attack, Bai Yunfei clenched his red light emitting right hand and punched out at it!

Eighty-one Fold Fist Force!

When fist met tail, Bai Yunfei was whipped to the side, but the wyrm wasn’t left unharmed. Howling in pain, it’s tail was thrust in the opposite direction of Bai Yunfei with a slight shiver to its frame.

“Bang!” Flipping himself upright in the air, Bai Yunfei’s legs bent at the knees as if preparing himself for impact.

Then, red light glowed beneath his feet, serving as solid ground for him to step on! Pushing against it, he flew in the opposite direction of his original path to come flying at the wyrm’s head again!

But having not been paying attention to what the wyrm was doing, Bai Yunfei was surprised to see a giant gaping maw come forward to greet him! Not only did it look like the wyrm was about to eat him, but its jaws were filled with blue light to blast him with a ball of elemental water as well.

Extending his right arm at the jaws of the soulbeast, the Ardent Sun Glove on Bai Yunfei’s hand exploded with scorching red light and heat to strike at the sphere of elemental water with a burst of elemental fire!

“Boom!!!” The two elements collided with one another, resulting in an explosion near the wyrm’s mouth, sending it backwards due to the blast!!

“Now’s my chance!!” Granted the prime opportunity to strike, Bai Yunfei tossed the Beast Taming Ring in his left hand towards the right forelimb of the wyrm!

Flying towards Bai Yunfei’s target in a trail of rainbow light, the Beast Taming Ring flew onto the wyrm’s arm and contracted quickly to latch onto it like a bracelet!

Chapter 408: The Strength of the Beast Taming Ring, and A Cool Mount

“Success!”

Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up with glee when he saw the Beast Taming Ring latch onto the wyrm. With his goal accomplished, Bai Yunfei kicked against the ground to retreat to the cave entrance.

He landed safely on the ground, but before he had time to turn around, his entire body staggered violently; threatening to fall down to the ground!!

In the moment his feet touched against the ground, all Bai Yunfei felt in his mind was a deep stabbing pain! A completely mystifying force was being enforced onto his mind, not too unsimilar to if a soulbeast had materialized in his mindspace and was shaking the place with its roar!!

“This is the Beast Taming Ring’s effect!” Needless to say, Bai Yunfei was quick to realize this was the additional effect of the ring!

“Success rate is dependent on the difference in mental strength between user and target....is this what it means by ‘success rate’? By defeating the soulbeast in mental strength....?” Having some sort of idea of the effect now, Bai Yunfei was quick to spur his soulforce into motion. Circulating it through his body, Bai Yunfei was pleased to feel a positive effect with his mind clearing up a bit.

He looked to the wyrm in front of him. Unlike him, the wyrm was in a slight daze, but its body shuddered violently, as if trying to fight the invisible strings binding it in a desperate struggle for its life. The Beast Taming Ring stuck on its right forelimb continued to shine furiously with light that was stabbing into its body as well! Each time a different ray of light from the ring struck the wyrm, the wyrm shivered violently again.

“I get it now! Controlling a soulbeast isn’t as easy as I thought! So I need more mental strength than it? Easy!!”

Only a second was needed for Bai Yunfei to really understand the scope of the situation. Fully enlightened now, he sat down on the ground to concentrate. Gathering up all of his focus, he began to try and start a ‘fight’ with his mental strength.

It had been a straightforward fight so far, so the blue-eyes wyrm was completely confused on why it was starting to feel so strange in the head. In fact, it was starting to feel like it could hardly feel itself think!!

That mysterious power in its mind was unbelievably fierce, and was actually daring enough to try and imprison it’s mind to control its body!

The sensation was absolutely terrifying to the wyrm. Unwilling to even fight with the human in front of it anymore, the wyrm tried its utmost best to fight off the external forces acting upon it, and its body shivering slightly as it did.

But the force was already growing rapidly in power over it. Not even a second after, the wyrm was rapidly losing its ground and was close to being overwhelmed!

Bai Yunfei held several advantages to him in this battle. The Violet Soul Ring on his right hand, the Yun’s Soul Ring on his left, the Cultivation Pendant around his neck, and the bracelet on his hand. All of them were glowing with light as Bai Yunfei made the best of their effects.

With these items providing him a boost in spirit, Bai Yunfei had well over two thousand points in it!! That in itself was a very terrifying sum and gave Bai Yunfei the mental strength beyond any other soul cultivator of his level.

The mental strength that the equipment gave him correlated with what ‘spirit’ was normally defined as. Not only did it mean

how fast one could recover their soulforce, it also pointed to the strength of one's soulsense as well, and how well one could control the elements.....

In his 'coil' form, Bai Yunfei had the mental strength of an early-stage Soul Exalt. Combined with the equipment he had, the amount of spirit, or mental strength he had now was equivalent to that of a mid-stage Soul Exalt. In other words, he could easily face off against the early-stage class six blue-eyes wyrm without discomfort.

Since this was the first time Bai Yunfei used the Beast Taming Ring in a battle, he wasn't used to its effects. But right now, enough time had passed for him to gain some first-hand knowledge on how to use it best, so now was the time for him to 'end' the fight.

When Bai Yunfei's mental strength overwhelmed the 'consciousness' of the wyrm in its mind, the consciousness came to a stop along with the wyrm's actual body. Its eyes were vacant and glossed over, as if in a trance.

Now that it was still, the area around the wyrm grew quiet as well. When it was previously struggling against Bai Yunfei's control, the wyrm had been thrashing around the place with its tail.

"Phew.....is it over?"

Bai Yunfei's eyes blinked open; he couldn't feel any struggle coming from the wyrm now, so he looked over to the wyrm. Having a forehead slick with sweat, his right hand came up to wipe it aside.

Fighting for domination over the wyrm's mind had been surprisingly tiring.

"The Beast Taming Ring's effect is strange as hell, but it's not easy to use!" he sighed. "If I have to do that every single time, then

the Beast Taming Ring's less useful than it is. I'd be dead if I was attacked by something else in that time....

“But using it just this once shouldn't be too bad. I'm sure I'll get better at it sooner or later.”

Bai Yunfei stood back up onto his feet. Sighing as he gave up thinking about the ring, he looked to the wyrm.

“Come.”

After a few silent seconds of observation, he called out to it.

The slight shiver in his mindspace alerted Bai Yunfei to the fact that something was happening.

The previously slugged look in the wyrm's eyes flickered slightly with rebellion, but it bled away as quickly as it came. Its giant body rose up as one of its feet rose into the air. Coming back down to the ground, it slowly made its way to Bai Yunfei before stopping just ten meters away.

“So this is what it means to ‘control’....” Bai Yunfei wondered. “Fall back!”

This time, the order was received instantly by the wyrm, who immediately move several steps backwards.

Bai Yunfei smiled in interest at the situation.

“Turn left! Turn right! Lift your foot up! Swing your tail! Form a water ball! Elemental edge! Roar! Jump! Do a handstand!!”

“Boom!!!!”

At the last command, the wyrm face planted into the ground.

“Oh....your ‘hands’ are a little short, aren't they? Forget the handstand then, get up!”

Humiliation and resistance flashed insistently through the wyrm's eyes, but nothing could be done. With each action it was forced to do, the fear the wyrm felt increased even more and more.

Soon, the terror it felt reached a tipping point when it realized that every single action was up to the human in front of it to control.

It could only submit itself to being manipulated.

Bai Yunfei nodded his head in satisfaction. Forming a hand seal, he dispelled the 'coil' form and allowed the second fireseed in him to return to the Cataclysmic Seal.

The 'coil' form dissolving meant that his mental strength would drop as well. But even then, it was still above a level where control over the wyrm was possible. Control after subjugation was easier than subjugation anyways, so the amount of mental strength needed to control the wyrm was lower now.

If 100% of his spirit was needed to subjugate the wyrm, then only 70% would be needed to keep control.

In other words, the Beast Taming Ring's effect was already in effect.

Bai Yunfei looked up to the skies. Somehow, while he was busy with the wyrm, the skies were already brightening, and the fiery sun was already halfway above the mountains to the east.

He looked back down at the wyrm in front of him, noticing that the size of its head was nearly as big as the cave entrance behind him.

Thinking about it, he called out to Xiao Qi, "Since it's day time, let's get going, come on, Xiao Qi!!"

Kicking off against the ground, he landed on top of the wyrm's head to rest upon a spot on its blue scales.

"Chirp~!!!"

An excited bird cry echoed from the caves before Xiao Qi came speeding out from it to circle around Bai Yunfei's head.

"Let's go!!"

Following Bai Yunfei's finger, the wyrm gave out a low growl before moving into the forest.....

Chapter 409: Xiao Qi's Love for Singing

Near a small river in the class six area of the Soulbeast Forest.

“Roarrrrr!!!”

From the south, the fearsome roar of a soulbeast scared a flock of bird soulbeasts into flight. Then came the shaking of the earth, where with each mighty footstep, a soulbeast as large as a three story building and blue as the ocean came running through the forest and towards a lake.

The giant blue soulbeast was the blue-eyes wyrm, and this area was a part of the forest where very few soulbeasts walked.

Two of the early-stage class six soulbeasts in the area retreated when it felt the blue-eyes wyrm invade their territory rather than come forward to stop it. Despite being of the same class, the blue-eyes wyrm was still stronger than its peers.

“Alright, let’s have a drink here, Xiao Lan.”

The wyrm came to a stop immediately by the lakeside at this command.

The voice came from on top of the wyrm’s head, and with a closer look, one would be able to see a young man sitting leisurely on top of it! On his right shoulder, a small bird the colors of the rainbow was carefully cleaning its feathers with its beak.

This young man was none other than Bai Yunfei.

Half a month had passed since Bai Yunfei left the caves. By using the Beast Taming Ring to tame the wyrm, Bai Yunfei had gained a mount to ‘tour’ the Soulbeast Forest.

He hadn’t a clear destination, so Bai Yunfei decided to just roam around the forest. Thanks to the wyrm’s intimidation, any soulbeast below the early-stage class six level fled whenever they felt its aura, and even the mid-stage class six soulbeasts weren’t

willing to fight it.

Thus, Bai Yunfei was able to go for days on end without meeting a soulbeast.

That didn't mean that the blue-eyes wyrm had no enemies or equals in the class six area, however. On the fourth day, Bai Yunfei was stopped by a late-stage class six vinebeast, but with his 'coil' form and the cooperation of the wyrm, the two were able to fight it on equal grounds.

In the end, Bai Yunfei emerged first from the fight as the victor.

Bai Yunfei learned his lesson after that fight and had the wyrm curb it's aura by a bit. There was no helping its large frame, but with how many trees there were in the forest, it wouldn't be too hard to travel out of sight from the other soulbeasts without earning any more unwanted attention.

Having researched the Beast Taming Ring even more throughout the month, Bai Yunfei felt himself rather accomplished with it, and taming the wyrm through mental strength was done with even more ease than before.

Just how Bai Yunfei was able to practice exerting his mental strength—or will—over another was rather obvious. Every so often, he'd remove the ring from the wyrm's arm and wait for it to recover enough to start attacking Bai Yunfei again. Then, Bai Yunfei would find an opportunity in the fight to put the Beast Taming Ring back on and then subjugate it's mind again with his mental strength....

For the first few iterations, the wyrm tried its best to attack Bai Yunfei with all it got. But when that proved fruitless, it swapped tactics and tried to flee. But each time, Bai Yunfei would forcibly equip the ring onto it before it could even get far away enough.

And after a month of 'torment', the blue-eyes wyrm was now completely terrified of Bai Yunfei. So submissive was the wyrm

now that it didn't even need Bai Yunfei to use the Beast Taming Ring. If he had a command, the wyrm would subconsciously start to obey.

Having noticed that, Bai Yunfei didn't bother to use the ring to control it. He gave the wyrm some degree of freedom, and had even promised it to let it go after some time.

But whether it understood him or not, Bai Yunfei said it anyways.

For the time being, though, Bai Yunfei decided to give it the name of 'Xiao Lan'.

TL Note: Like Xiao Qi, the Xiao here means little, and the Lan means blue.

.....

Bai Yunfei leapt down from the wyrm's head and waved his hand. "Go hunt for some food, but come back when it gets dark."

As if being awarded amnesty, the eyes of the wyrm teared up. Turning about face, it ran into the forest to enjoy its 'period of freedom'; the happiest part of its day.

While it couldn't run away, it could at the very least enjoy moving about without being commanded.

Bai Yunfei walked to the lakes. After successfully testing that the water was safe to drink, Bai Yunfei leapt into the waters without warning.

Soaking comfortably in the waters, Bai Yunfei began to rinse his body of the accumulated filth from his travels. Once that was done, he started for the banks, splashing water as he left the waters. With a flash of red light, the robes on his body was dried in an instant, giving him an even more refreshed sensation.

"Chirp chirp~!"

An excited chirp from Xiao Qi was heard before it dove into the

waters with a splash like an arrow. Coming back out from the waters a few meters away, Xiao Qi could be seen with a small mudfish in its beak before it was swallowed whole.

Still not satisfied by such a small meal, the bird disappeared in a flash of light to transform to the size of an eagle hawk. Diving back into the waters, it came back out with two even larger and fatter fishes in its claws to eat.

Rather than eating the fishes straight away, it flew in a circle back to where Bai Yunfei was and dropped the two fishes in front of him with a chirp.

“Haha, you want to eat fish for dinner?” Bai Yunfei chuckled, “Alright then, let me prepare the fire, go bring back another two.”

“Chirp~!” Hooting in joy, Xiao Qi took off again to bring back another two fish as requested.

While it did so, Bai Yunfei expertly cleaned the fishes of the guts and other unwanted parts. Finding a bunch of sticks, he used some of them to skewer the fishes while using the others to start a fire to cook over.

By the time the fire was made, and Bai Yunfei was finishing off the rest of the preparations, Xiao Qi was already back with the last two fishes. Perched on a nearby tree branch, it began to sing a happy tune to itself.

Its tune was melodic, and very happy sounding to the ears with how soothing the rhythm was. With how dangerous and foreboding the Soulbeast Forest felt, Xiao Qi’s song felt rather out of place, but not unwelcome.

As he listened to its song, Bai Yunfei shook his head with a smile. He learned a lot about Xiao Qi over the past few days, and what he learned had been very surprising, to say the least. The biggest shocker was that Xiao Qi’s intelligence and capacity to learn was beyond what Bai Yunfei had expected.

Already, the Xiao Qi of today was capable of understanding every single word Bai Yunfei said without error, and even nod in response to Bai Yunfei's questions. All of the emotions on Xiao Qi's were succinctly expressed, and the chirps it spoke matched the expressions just as well.

One more thing Bai Yunfei found hard to believe was the degree of closeness he and Xiao Qi had. In the short time they traveled together, Bai Yunfei felt like there was a deep 'mental connection' between him and the bird! More often than not, Bai Yunfei didn't even need to say anything to let Xiao Qi know what he was thinking. The bird would just chirp in response, signifying as a response to a question or sentiment.

Situations like this were common occurrences for soul cultivators and their contracted soulbeasts, but Bai Yunfei knew that in his case, there was no contract between him and Xiao Qi.

It most likely had to do with the +14 egg, Bai Yunfei guessed. He remembered seeing the soul compatibility being at 75% before the egg hatched, which was a level high enough that it'd normally only be reached after contracting with a soulbeast.

So in a sense, rather than being contracted with him, Xiao Qi was Bai Yunfei's 'soulbound soulbeast'.

He expected Xiao Qi to leap several levels of strength like it did that one night before, but that never came. Xiao Qi remained a late-stage class four even to this day.

He tried his best to have Xiao Qi fight certain battles so he could try and see how strong it really was, but surprisingly, the bird was a 'pacifist'. It never wanted to participate in battles and would fly to a faraway tree branch to watch Bai Yunfei fight, participating occasionally with a motivational chirp....

If Xiao Qi wasn't willing to fight, then Bai Yunfei wouldn't force the issue. It didn't really matter to him how strong the bird was since it wasn't much use in the place they were in.

It was still interesting to see Xiao Qi emanate four different elements at times, fire, wood, wind, and lightning to be specific. These were the same four elements that the egg listed as an affinity.

If anything, Xiao Qi was without a goal or danger in the world. It was content following Bai Yunfei around and was like a child exploring the unknown world for the very first time. Everything it came across was a source of curiosity for it, and each discovery filled the bird with boundless joy.

Just listening to the bird's happy chirping for the past dozen days would fill anyone with a happy and peaceful mood....

"Alright, Xiao Qi, time to eat!" He called out to the bird after finishing cooking.

"Chirp chirp~!" There was a gleeful chirp before a shadow swooped down to grab hold of one of the cooked fishes. Biting a piece off, it swallowed the piece before chirping in satisfaction.

"Haha...." Smiling, Bai Yunfei took another one of the fishes to eat.

Polishing off the first fish, Bai Yunfei was about to start on the second when suddenly he flew to his feet to look at the forest in front of him!

In the darkness of the night, there was a faint bluish glow. It was traveling towards Bai Yunfei with the speed of a shooting star, and the light was getting brighter and brighter as it drew close!

Chapter 410: One Azure Leaf Boat, Yun Liantian the Wanderer! (First)

Like a bluish shooting star, the light came shooting towards Bai Yunfei with speeds that Bai Yunfei was barely able to even register!

It was a flying soul armament!

An absolutely strong one with speeds that was many times faster than the Tempest Sword!

In the ten seconds of shock Bai Yunfei was in, the light had already traveled far enough for him to finally see two faint figures within the light....

And before he could even sense how strong they were, the two figures were already a hundred meters away!

Freezing in place when it was a hundred meters away, the light gradually decreased in intensity to fully reveal the two figures inside it.

When there wasn't much light left, Bai Yunfei was able to fully see what kind of soul armament they had been flying on.

It was a....small boat!

Green and shaped like a leaf, its curved structure was very naturally formed at about a meter wide and three meters long without a sail nor paddle. A bubble of elemental wind surrounded the boat, allowing it to levitate in the air.

On the boat, there were two figures dressed in black and white. The white-robed figure in the front was a young man who didn't look a day older than his thirties. His face was sallow, and his hair hung freely behind his head, but there was a mysterious smile on his face, as if Bai Yunfei was an interesting subject to observe.

Behind him was a young man dressed in black. He was shorter than the other, and his hair covered parts of his face so that his

impassive facial features couldn't be seen. But, if Bai Yunfei had to make a guess, this young man was the same age as him.

“Haha, how unexpected to meet a lone traveler in this part of the class six zone. And a young one at that....” The older male laughed, his voice making him sound slightly older than Bai Yunfei expected.

“Young, and not too weak. He looks like yet another peerless individual in this genius generation. I wonder if he's the disciple of that old fogey....” The man thought to himself, “But young man, how did you arrive in the class six area of the forest as a late-stage Soul Ancestor?”

“Roarrrr!!!!”

Just at that moment, a roar bursted out from behind Bai Yunfei. The giant trees behind him were split apart to reveal the blue-eyes wyrm.

It had been summoned by Bai Yunfei back when he first realized the boat was coming and rushed back to support him.

“Eh? A class six soulbeast?” The male commented in surprise. “Is this your contracted soulbeast? If it's a blue-eyes wyrm, it's no wonder you were able to make it this far.”

Clearly, these two men were misunderstanding the situation. “Young man, don't be afraid. We're only here to ask a few questions. As long as you answer truthfully, there won't be any trouble....”

In other words, if Bai Yunfei were to answer dishonestly, he'd die on the spot!

The smile on his face showed that he was more than willing to carry out that threat.

While Bai Yunfei was slightly surprised by the two, he was still calm enough to make several quick observations. His eyes flickered back from the boat to the man after he heard the threat, but rather

than to answer rudely, he bowed his head politely to say, “Whatever question senior Yun has, this junior will answer to the best of my ability!”

“Oh? You know of me?” This time, it was the other man’s turn to look surprised.

“Yes,” Bai Yunfei nodded, “my master once told me about you, senior Yun.”

“And who is your master?”

“I am Bai Yunfei, student of the Crafting School and disciple to master Zi Jin.” Bai Yunfei reported.

“The Crafting School? Bai Yunfei....hm, I believe I’ve heard that name several months ago. You were one of the prominent ones during that soulbeast wave.” The man replied, “Can you prove your identity?”

This was a question Bai Yunfei was prepared to answer. Holding up the Violet Soul Ring, he spoke, “Would you recognize this ring by chance, senior?”

“The Violet Soul Ring?” The man’s eyes flashed in recognition of the ring. “Haha, that settles things. I hadn’t any idea big brother Zi Jin would take on another disciple, no wonder you were so calm.”

Not only did this man know Zi Jin, he even called Zi Jin his ‘elder brother’!!

Sighing in relief to himself, Bai Yunfei knew that he was safe for the time being. The reason why he announced his identity so quickly was because he didn’t know what the person would do to him if he didn’t.

Rumors had it that the man in front of him didn’t bother to follow common logic. At one moment, he could be wishing you a happy day, and the next moment, he’d be breaking your arms and legs while asking how you were....

Owner of the One Azure Leaf Boat, Yun Liantian the Wanderer!!
One of the five great wandering soul cultivators!

Bai Yunfei knew better than to trust his physical appearance, the man wasn't thirty years old, but many many times older than that!

He was a man that was older than even his senior, Kou Changkong!

One more reason why Bai Yunfei knew this man was due to the flying soul armament, the one known as the 'One Azure Leaf Boat'. It was the signature of the man and also the soul armament Zi Jin crafted himself!

It could thus be said that Yun Liantian and Zi Jin were both friendly with each other.

Yun Liantian's name was one that many people would bemoan while others would praise. In the world of soul cultivators, Yun Liantian was one who did deeds both heinous and virtuous.

He was an oddity, a person who's emotions changed faster than the turning of the pages. He did what he wanted at the drop of a hat and without the fear of anything. As long as it was to his liking, he'd do anything.....

Sometimes, he'd give items to people he liked, and other times, he'd kill others for their possessions....

As for his strength.....

It was said that twenty years ago, he was a mid-stage Soul King.

As of right now, no one knew his actual strength.

Even with things looking better for Bai Yunfei, Yun Liantian hadn't a reason to talk with Bai Yunfei. Nodding his head, the man spoke, "Then let me ask you, have you come across the traces of anyone from the Beast Taming School?"

"The Beast Taming School?!" Bai Yunfei's heart skipped a beat; he hadn't the foggiest that such a question would be asked of him.

“I won’t lie, senior. This one came across one from the Beast Taming School a while ago.”

“Oh? Speak then! Who was it, and where did he go?”

“I came across one of the elders, his name was Xing Yuan. It was back in the class five area, but it’s been two months since then, I’m afraid I don’t know which direction he went. Please forgive me, senior.”

“Xing Yuan?” Yun Liantian repeated, “Anything else?”

“That is all I know about the Beast Taming School, senior.”

“Forget it then. I’m sure he’ll come deeper into the forest, I’ll look for him myself.” Yun Liantian spoke. The boat beneath his feet started to glow once more as he prepared to leave, but before he could fly off, he suddenly spoke to Bai Yunfei.

“Since you’re brother Zi Jin’s disciple, let me give you this warning. Go no further into the forest. Something major will happen soon, and with your strength, death would be the least of your worries. Best leave this place at once!”

And with that, the man flew off into the air with his companion, disappearing to the northern skies before Bai Yunfei could respond....

Chapter 411: The Melancholy of Xiao Qi

(Second)

Bai Yunfei sighed as the boat left towards the skies. Though Yun Liantian not showing any hostility towards him, the pressure he felt was utterly uncomfortable.

“One of the five great wandering soul cultivators....wonder what he’s doing here in the Soulbeast Forest? If he’s looking for the Beast Taming School, does he have a grudge with them too?”

“Doesn’t seem like it. Master said that Yun Liantian’s tends to travel without aligning himself with any group. Then....is he with the Beast Taming School?! Are they planning something?”

“Master also said Yun Liantian likes to travel alone. So who was that other guy with him?”

Not even a few minutes were spared between Bai Yunfei and Yun Liantian, but he felt something was off about the man. “Eh, who cares who he is? I’ll only get a headache if I try to think about it....”

“He’s one of the five great wandering soul cultivators, and a Soul King. Whatever he does isn’t my business. And if he says death awaits me further ahead, then I’ll just finish my business elsewhere!”

And with that, Bai Yunfei gave up thinking about the two men to finish his own meal. Then finding a large tree to sleep in, Bai Yunfei began to take a nap.

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On the other side, the One Azure Leaf Boat was sailing through the air countless of kilometers away.

On the boat, Yun Liantian stood at the helm with a pensive look on his face. He was thinking about his meeting with Bai Yunfei.

“If that Bai Yunfei isn’t lying, then the Beast Taming School are

still in the forest. But is it only that Xing Yuan? Or are there more? According to my information, there should be at least two of the elders here, not just that Xing Yuan. That man must've been a scout. Then....then that other piece of information must be true!!”

His eyes lit up with anticipation and his entire frame started to shake somewhat at the thought.

It had been many years since he felt so excited about something....

“But that Bai Yunfei is really something else!” Changing his line of thought, Yun Liantian sighed aloud in his comment about Bai Yunfei. “Quick to react and quick to think. He has those two qualities in spades over his peers of age. But most importantly, he was able to form a soul contract with a class six soulbeast despite being a late-stage Soul Ancestor only. And to think he’s traveling through this forest without anyone as his guardian, Zi Jin’s method of training a disciple is rather outrageous....”

He turned his head back to the black robed male behind him, “Gui Xiu, you’ve seen Bai Yunfei’s strength for yourself. You’re both of the same age almost, but he’s also a late-stage Soul Ancestor. You’ve always thought yourself to be peerless, so how do you feel now?”

The one now known as ‘Gui Xiu’ looked back at Yun Liantian.

“I will surpass him soon enough.” He stated.

It was a simple sentence, but in it held his conviction and determination.

“Haha, very good! This is what I expect from my disciple! You must remain proud and peerless!!” Yun Liantian barked with laughter, evidently satisfied with the response.

“Rest assured, I’m sure it’s because of that class six soulbeast that Bai Yunfei was able to get to the level he is now. We’re here in the Soulbeast Forest to find you a suitably strong soulbeast as well.

When you form a contract, you'll leap into the levels of the Soul Exalt realm soon enough!

“You might be a little late in becoming known like the others on that ‘top ten prodigies’, but in time, you'll definitely outrstrip the entire list!!” Yun Liantian declared, “The disciple of Yun Liantian must be the strongest disciple of them all!!”

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The next day.

Fully refreshed from his nightly sleep, Bai Yunfei climbed down the tree he had been in. Urging the blue-eyes wyrm, he continued his journey through the forest.

“I shouldn't ignore Yun Liantian's warning. The later half of the class six area is too dangerous for me anyways, if I stay there, I'll definitely find danger.” Bai Yunfei thought to himself, “I'll start heading perpendicular then! The middle part of the class six area is a great place to train. If I keep going west, I'll be able to avoid whatever it is the Beast Taming School or that Yun Liantian is doing. And if I'm not, I'll at least be far way enough to not matter.

“Then again, Na Lanyin said I should go northwest....”

Bai Yunfei's eyebrows scrunched together, “Forget it! Safety's more important than heading deeper in. The ‘fortune’ Na Lanyin talked about might've been about the events in the cave anyways. I don't need to go northwest anymore.

“Alright, that settles things! I'll go west!” Looking up to the sun, Bai Yunfei did his best to determine where west was. “Xiao Lan, go that way.” He pointed for the blue-eyes wyrm to see.

“Xiao Qi, we're going....” He called out for the bird, but when he got no response, Bai Yunfei looked up in surprise, “Eh? Xiao Qi?”

Xiao Qi would've normally come chirping at him without him even needing to call out for it, but this time, Xiao Qi was nowhere to be seen.

By concentrating on his senses, Bai Yunfei could sense that Xiao Qi was nearby enough to hear him, but for some reason, it wasn't coming out. But when he looked at where Xiao Qi was, Bai Yunfei did a double take in bafflement.

Fifty meters to his right was a very large tree. Near the top of the tree was a small three meter wide bird's nest with six equally small gray-colored birds. They were all the size of a pigeon, and their beaks were wide open as they chirped incessantly as if waiting for food to be brought to them.

And in the middle of these birds was a clearly different bird colored like the rainbow. It was the same size as the other birds and extended its beak upward to cry out as well.

It was Xiao Qi.

Just as Bai Yunfei was about to head on over to check up on Xiao Qi, a black shadow came dropping down over the nest. It was a bird with a wingspan of twenty meters, and a tail that was as long as its wings. Shrinking in size when it landed, the bird lurched over the nest with a bowl-like container in its mouth. In the container were all sorts of still squirming fishes.

This bird was the early-stage class six soulbeast, a phoenix-tailed eagle!

With its mother arriving back home, the birdlings began to cry out in earnest and wait eagerly for their food.

When the mother bird landed on the nest, its eyes landed firstly on the Xiao Qi that was disguising itself as one of her own. Pausing in disbelief at first, the bird then squawked twice from anger before tossing the small bird out from its nest.

But like a stubborn child, Xiao Qi came flying back to the nest to be fed almost as if it wasn't thrown out in the first place.

“Haha! Xiao Qi, what are you doing?! Can you even pretend to be them like that? You're the color of a rai—”

For a while, Bai Yunfei mistook Xiao Qi's antics of that of a mischievous child and wasn't worried that it'd get hurt with how preoccupied the mother bird was with her children.

But then when he saw the expression on Xiao Qi's face, the smile on his lips and the words in his mouth died away.

Not only was Xiao Qi's eyes broadcasting its emotions, but the emotional bond Bai Yunfei had with it was showing him an emotion from the bird he had never seen before....

The emotion of sorrow....

Chapter 412: Meeting the Greenwood Wolf Again (Third)

From its birth, Xiao Qi was born without guilt or worry. Everything in the world was new to it, and everything made him happy.

But in this current moment, the only emotion Xiao Qi was showing this time was of sorrow.....

“Chirp chirp....”

It chirped twice.

Coming to a stop on Bai Yunfei’s shoulder, Xiao Qi curled up on itself as if tired.

“.....”

From the phoenix-tailed eagle to Xiao Qi, Bai Yunfei’s eyes flickered in between as if slowly making the connection of what Xiao Qi was thinking.

There was plenty to this world, and Xiao Qi was only just starting to learn more about it. So when it finally came across the emotion of ‘familial love’ being shown from the mother bird to its children, Xiao Qi yearned to experience it for itself.

In its short lifespan, such a memory like the sight in front of him had never occurred before. It didn’t know why it felt such a way before, but now that he knew that such a feeling existed, it became a problem Xiao Qi couldn’t stop thinking about.

Having no parents or siblings, Xiao Qi was unfortunately bereft the blessings other young soulbeasts had.

“A mother, huh....” Bai Yunfei sighed. He thought back to the fight that took place between the greenwood wolf and prisma oriole outside the cave, and how the prisma oriole sacrificed its life in order to protect her children.

He just had to sympathize for Xiao Qi. Reaching a finger up, he stroked Xiao Qi's feather without a word.

Patting the wyrm on its head with his other hand, Bai Yunfei directed it to start moving towards the west.

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For the next few days, Bai Yunfei guided the wyrm through the forest—but not deeper into it—and fought many soulbeast for the experience. Having lost some of his strength back when Xiao Qi was in its egg, Bai Yunfei was quick to recover. It wouldn't be long before he'd be back to full strength.

Ever since that day with the phoenix-tailed eagle, Xiao Qi was distinctly different than before. It'd still hum and chirp happily on a regular basis, but whenever it came across the heart-warming scene of a family of soulbeasts, it'd grow sullen.

No matter what Bai Yunfei did, he always failed to cheer the bird up.

He debated telling Xiao Qi about its mother before but feared that it might backfire on him. Xiao Qi's mother had died as a result of the greenwood wolf, so to tell Xiao Qi that now would potentially be crushing.

So Bai Yunfei decided not to tell it.

On the fourth day, Bai Yunfei sat bored out of his mind on the top of the blue-eyes wyrm's head. He had only just defeated the king of the territory here; a mid-stage class six four-armed golden bear. It had taken Bai Yunfei the 'coil' form in order to fight the bear, but he managed to defeat it in the end.

Whilst he sat there recovering his soulforce, Xiao Qi came to a plop on his shoulder, as if in a sad mood.

"Howll!!!!" Before Bai Yunfei was fully recovered, he heard a fearsome howl not too far away.

“Xiao Lan, head towards the right.” He instructed.

“Grrr.....” It responded obediently, swinging itself to the right towards the mountain where the howl had come from.

With so much soulforce and elements being concentrated in the area, it was obvious to Bai Yunfei that there was a battle taking place here. Having the ability to detect auras, Bai Yunfei could sense straight away if any two class six soulbeasts were to fight. Though normally this wouldn’t be enough to catch Bai Yunfei’s interest, something about this fight made him curious.

When the wyrm circled around the mountain to the front, Bai Yunfei was able to see the two fighting soulbeasts a kilometer away.

And what he saw caused his eyes to widen.

“Is that really it?! How did it come running all the way here?!”

In the direction Bai Yunfei was looking at, there was a relatively open space where two dark-green figures were clashing with one another. Both were using elemental wood to fight, and if Bai Yunfei looked carefully enough, he could make out the two combatant’s figures.

One was a frog the size of a tiger, and the other—much to Bai Yunfei’s shock—was a greenwood wolf!

Any ordinary greenwood wolf wouldn’t be enough to make Bai Yunfei surprised like this, but this wolf in particular had a very prominent and new scar on the right side of its body. Clearly, this scar was a new one with how the tissue was still slightly raw.

If Bai Yunfei focused on its aura, he’d be able to notice something familiar about it.

It was the very same greenwood wolf he had seen outside the cave!

The same wolf that had killed Xiao Qi’s mother!

Bai Yunfei was bewildered. He hadn't expected to come across the greenwood wolf here of all places.

The wolf looked nearly fully recovered from its wounds, judging from its appearances and how it fought. The other soulbeast was a late-stage class five soulbeast on the verge of breakthrough; this was a fight to break that bottleneck!

Upon closer observation, the wolf was winning the battle. It wouldn't be long before it'd kill the frog.

"The Soulbeast Forest is huge, but I happened to find you anyways....alright, let me use you to solve my problems then!"

Growing silent, Bai Yunfei thought for a moment to decide on the next course of action.

"Xiao Qi. There's something I should tell you." As Xiao Qi curiously watched the fight, Bai Yunfei stroked its feathers.

"Chirp?" It replied, not sure what Bai Yunfei was about to ask.

"Do you want to know about your mother?"

Xiao Qi froze straight away when Bai Yunfei asked. Feathers trembling slightly from its emotions, Xiao Qi hurried to chirp yes to him.

"Xiao Qi. Prepare yourself for what I'm about to tell you. Your mother.....is no longer here." He spoke softly. He wasn't treating Xiao Qi like a soulbeast, but any other human, so he tried to be as considerate as possible.

The moment the final word was spoken, Xiao Qi frozen up straight away. Where it was hopping before in anxiety, it was now frozen still to the ground to look at him, disbelief in its eyes at what it had just heard.

"Xiao Qi," he began, "On the day I found you, there were two soulbeasts fighting outside the cave...."

He knew Xiao Qi could understand where he was going with this.

Without a pause to his words, he slowly continued to retell what he saw between the prisma oriole and greenwood wolf.

“....And in the end, the prisma oriole decided to blow herself up to force the greenwood wolf away...”

“That prisma oriole was your mother. And that greenwood wolf over there is the one that fought her. That wound on its abdomen there was inflicted by your mother.”

“Houuu!!!!”

Before Bai Yunfei could say anything more, a loud roar of excitement came from the battle up ahead.

The greenwood wolf had its head tilted up to the skies to howl while beneath it, the frog was thrashing on the ground with its intestines outside of its body.

The greenwood wolf was injured quite badly, but it was excited that it had won the battle. Already, an impressive amount of aura was radiating from the wolf as it approached. Snapping its jaws onto the frog's head, it tore apart the frog to get to its soulgem before swallowing it whole!

The moment when the soulgem entered the wolf's body, green light burst out from the wolf and begun to heal the wolf's wounds at amazing speeds. Simultaneously, the wolf's soulforce was rapidly climbing in amount!

The breakthrough was....starting!!

Chapter 413: Xiao Qi's Strength (Fourth)

The battle hadn't been interesting to Bai Yunfei. "Xiao Qi, I didn't tell you before because I didn't want you to think too much about it. But if you want to know, I'll tell you it today. Your mother sacrificed herself to protect your life. And today....the enemy that forced her to sacrifice herself is right in front of you. I can help you take revenge, or if you want, I'll capture it first so that you can pers—"

"Chirp!!!"

A flash of violet light exploded out from Xiao Qi's body before Bai Yunfei could even finish speaking. Zooming from its spot next to him, Xiao Qi grew in size as elemental wind covered its left wing and elemental lightning covered its right. Like a bolt of lightning, it flew straight for the greenwood wolf!

This time, Bai Yunfei felt yet another emotion coming from Xiao Qi he had never seen before.

Fury!!

"Xiao Qi!!"

He was surprised. No matter how much he might've thought Xiao Qi was repressing its emotions, he never expected it to come coming out all at once!

This Xiao Qi was completely different to the normally innocent Xiao Qi of before. The entirety of the soulforce Xiao Qi was exuding showed one emotion Bai Yunfei was all too familiar with....the emotion to kill!

Its speed was another surprising factor. This was the first Bai Yunfei had ever seen Xiao Qi fly so fast. The combined usage of elemental wind and lightning gave it a burst of speed that completely outstripped the capabilities of any late-stage class four soulbeast.

In fact, it was faster than what most class five soulbeasts were capable of!

By the time Bai Yunfei even finished calling out to Xiao Qi, the bird was already right above the greenwood wolf!

At this current moment, the greenwood wolf was at a very important part of its life. Swallowing the frog's soulgem had been the catalyst for it to start its advancement into the next class. In just two seconds, its aura was already quickly reaching the limits of a late-stage class five soulbeast, and in two seconds, it was on the verge of becoming a class six!

But right before it could smash through the final barrier to do so, Xiao Qi had arrived!

“Chirp!!!”

Like a bolt of lightning, Xiao Qi came to a stop over the wolf's head. With fury in its eyes, Xiao Qi's entire body was awash with a red light blinding to the eyes. The light quickly manifested into a raging fire that covered the bird's entire body, turning it from a rainbow-colored bird into a raging phoenix!

“Whoosh!”

From the flames unfurled a giant wing to give the wolf a furious slap!

In an instant, several hundred fireballs came raining down onto the ground whizzing and pelting the wolf in their descent!

Not even five seconds had transpired from when Xiao Qi came flying out, landing above the wolf, and then summoning multiple fireballs to rain down on it!

Whether it was in movement or attacking speed, both of the two were far beyond the capabilities of a late-stage class four soulbeast!

Previously relishing in the sensation of powering up, the wolf had been completely distracted, and had only looked up at the

skies when the fireballs were about to hit it!

With nowhere to run or even enough time to dodge, the greenwood wolf could only do one thing; howl.

Due to its soulforce prioritizing the recovery of its wounds, the wolf had only been able to have enough elemental wood cover its body before the attacks landed upon him!

“Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom....”

Several hundred fireballs descended upon the earth like a hailstorm of fire. Each firestorm left a crater several meters wide while the other fireballs struck the wolf straight on. The elemental wood protecting the wolf rippled with each fireball that it touched, protecting it from the brunt of the force.

Meanwhile, even the frog’s corpse underneath the wolf had been rendered into fire and ash under the assault.

“Grrr....” A low growl was uttered from the wolf. It hadn’t been too harmed by the fireballs yet, but it wasn’t sure how long it could last underneath the assault.

The fireballs were extremely weird. The wolf expected them all to be equal in power, but there were a few of the fireballs that were more powerful than the others!

Right now, the wolf was in a very critical state of being. It couldn’t forcibly stop the process of ascending in class, else it be barred from it forever.

It just needed five seconds at most to make the breakthrough and gain a dramatic increase in power. If it did, then it’d definitely be able to tear apart this little bird as a reward!

But even as the wolf was preparing itself to kill Xiao Qi, another fireball slammed into its throat!

In that instant, a strange feeling shot straight through the wolf’s head. It felt as though someone had taken a sledgehammer to its

head; any thought it had was instantly scattered, and its mind was left in a daze!

“Houuu!!” It roared, trying its best to gather up even more elemental wood to protect itself. But even though it tried to do that, it instead raised its right forelimb to lash out with a blade of elemental energy to strike at a tree!

This was....confusion!

From farther away, Bai Yunfei had been chasing Xiao Qi forward until a certain point. When Xiao Qi first flew to attack the wolf, he had activated the ‘coil’ form to skywalk over, but then when he got halfway, the rain of fireballs unleashed by Xiao Qi gave pause to Bai Yunfei. Stunned, he watched as the wolf was pelted by the fires before it attacked at something else without reason!

He knew what that meant straight away. This was the state of ‘confusion’!

“But how....” Bai Yunfei’s mouth were as wide open as was his eyes, but coherent words failed to come out from them. His pupils followed Xiao Qi’s movements as if he was watching a ghost rather than a bird.

“Th—this....this is....”

Even now, he was having trouble speaking.

Still several hundred meters ahead of him, Xiao Qi had no longer any elemental energy surrounding its being. The elemental fire that had previously cloaked it was gone with the attack, but this time, Xiao Qi’s wings were shining with light still. Eyes still piercingly sharp as it glared down the wolf, it flapped another one of its wings as soon as the firestorm was finished!

Following this second wing flap, the soulforce in Xiao Qi’s body began to churn strangely. In front of its body, a black dot was starting to form, growing with each passing second.

Soon, it grew into the shape of a large crack about a third of a

meter in width and two meters in length!

When Xiao Qi unfurled its wing, it was as though a command had been sent to the crack, as it began to fly at the wolf straight after!

Simultaneously, Bai Yunfei was finally able to spit out the first coherent words in a while.....

“Spatial Edge!!”

Chapter 414: Not an Effect But a Skill!

The move Xiao Qi had just used was the Spatial Edge!

Silently, the pitch-black fissure of space flew forward before moving through the still confused wolf without pause!!

Locking up when it felt the attack touch its body, the wolf immediately lost all sense of color in its face as if its lifeforce was sapped away!

From where the Spatial Edge touched, whether it was the elemental wood protecting the wolf, the wolf's body, or even the ground beneath it, all of it was gone!

Eaten away by the Spatial Edge without a trace to be seen!

The midsection of the wolf was completely gone, leaving behind only two halves still standing upright. Blood and intestines were flowing out from the halves left behind, filling up the moon-shaped crevice left behind in the ground....

“.....”

On the other side three hundred meters away from Xiao Qi, Bai Yunfei stood as still as a statue with his mouth dropped open. The instant death of the wolf and the appearance of the confusion and Spatial Edge effect was completely unexpected to him.

In fact, he had completely forgotten that the two existed.

“Chirp!!!”

the melancholic voice of the bird making its way to his ears.

In another burst of bright green light, Xiao Qi shot like an arrow towards the wolf's body!

“Ptch!”

Two sharp hook-like claws clutched at the wolf's head, gouging out its eyes in the process. Carrying the head up into the air, Xiao

Qi let loose another shrill chirp and burst of red light before rendering apart one of the halves into pieces!

Blood splattered down onto the ground like rain from the messy parts. Its soulgem was briefly revealed in the air before Xiao Qi took it into its beak and gulped it down!

.....

The summoning of fire, the evisceration of a soulbeast, and then the devouring of a soulgem!

In just one short minute, Xiao Qi had done all of those things to kill the greenwood wolf out of revenge for its mother!

Bai Yunfei didn't expect Xiao Qi to swallow the soulgem; he was still finding it hard to believe that such a bloodbath of a spectacle could come from the normally pacifistic Xiao Qi.

But before he could calm down, yet another unexpected development was already happening!

After swallowing the wolf's soulgem, Xiao Qi's entire body started to glow with a green light, covering its entire body in it!

Then, its soulforce as a late-stage class four soulbeast was fully felt before it started to expand in strength!

From a late-stage class four to the limits of one, and then....early-stage class five!

But it didn't stop there! Continuing to climb, Bai Yunfei felt Xiao Qi's power reach.....mid-stage class five!

“Chirp~!!!”

Another delightful chirp came from Xiao Qi as the green light started to recede back into Xiao Qi's body.

With the green light gone, Xiao Qi's soulforce was back to normal, and with that calm now as well, Xiao Qi could be seen hovering in the sky for a brief moment. Then, with a flap of its wings, it turned around to fly back to Bai Yunfei several hundred

meters away.

“Chirp chirp.....”

It chirped twice. Turning back to the size of a sparrow, Xiao Qi landed onto Bai Yunfei’s right shoulder and curled itself up. Resting its head underneath its wing, Xiao Qi went into solitude....

The events of what just happened was still being processed in Bai Yunfei’s head. He took a deep breath in before turning around to climb back onto the blue-eyes wrym’s head.

Dispelling the ‘coil’ form, Bai Yunfei commanded the wrym to continue forwards slowly while he sat there with his left hand stroking Xiao Qi’s feathers. His right hand was rested on his kneecap, and his index finger occasional struck against his knee rhythmically, so as to help him think.

Even with the spectacle well over now, Bai Yunfei found it extremely hard to believe what he saw was real.

“The confusion status, the spatial edge, and if I look closely, that firestorm.....those fireballs were clearly very different than normal....” he replayed the battle back in his mind, “That must’ve been the +14 additional effect of the egg, so Xiao Qi has the effect now, that’s....”

The destruction of the soulbeast egg still left Bai Yunfei with some lingering regrets, especially when he thought about the spatial edge. But if he looked at things now, he had to admit, the stats of the +14 egg wasn’t completely lost.

Xiao Qi had ‘inherited’ them!

He grinned at this. It was unexpected, but the results were what it was!

He hadn’t a reason why this might have occurred, but it’d still be useless even if he did! Just trying to think about it was a waste of brain cells, since everything about Xiao Qi was definitely beyond the norms of what was normally expected.

So to try and find logic in what was otherwise an illogical case would be easier than to empty the oceans with a spoon.

“And then there was that abnormal increase in power....” he swapped over to another line of thought. “Even if it swallowed the soulgem of a wolf that was about to become a class six, Xiao Qi’s increase in strength was far too bizarre. A soulgem is a supplementary item to gaining strength, but Xiao Qi should’ve been hard-pressed becoming an early-stage class five, let alone a mid-stage....

“There’s only one other reason why Xiao Qi would’ve had such a sharp increase in strength,” closing his eyes, Bai Yunfei thought more about the situation, “that feeling back then felt a little weird, but also familiar at the same time. It felt like a.....

“Like if an effect was activated!!”

His eyes flew open at the thought.

“It was slightly off, but the feeling is definitely there....back when the wolf was hit by the confusion effect and when Xiao Qi used the spatial edge....if I’m not wrong, that was the feeling of an effect being activated!”

The more he thought about it, the more he felt right about his suspicions. “Does this mean that the ‘equipment effects’ influenced Xiao Qi’s strength and development? If that’s true, then that means.....the +14 additional effect!”

He started to think about when he upgraded the egg to +14. The true results of that was a mystery to Bai Yunfei, but it more than likely had to do with the mystery that was Xiao Qi’s strength now.

“An increase in attacking strength, the confusion effect, the Spatial Edge, and the mysterious +14 effect.....does this mean Xiao Qi is a type of ‘living’ equipment now?

“No, I can’t call them ‘effects’. Xiao Qi isn’t a piece of equipment, but a living soulbeast, it’d be inappropriate to call them the effects.

Maybe I'll start calling them the 'moves' or 'skills' of Xiao Qi.....”

Having solved that last conundrum, Bai Yunfei felt himself rather elated, as if a feeling of joy was raising his spirits.

“Seems like I've got myself a decent 'partner'....”

Chapter 415: Reaching the 'Limits' in One Month?

A change had overcome Xiao Qi ever since it killed the greenwood wolf. The change was so big, it was almost as if the bird was born again, but if the biggest change had to be said, it'd be that the bird loved to battle now.

Before, the bird loathed taking part in battles, but now it was fighting with even more vigor than the blue-eyes wyrm.

Taking flight to any opponent Bai Yunfei fought against, Xiao Qi fought as if fighting was the only way it could vent its feelings; sometimes, the attacks it used were so widespread that even Bai Yunfei had to leap out of the way to avoid.

Xiao Qi's rate of improvement grew more and more astonishing with each passing day. From each battle, Bai Yunfei could note that Xiao Qi's actual strength was beyond what a mid-stage class five soulbeast should be capable of.

In truth, it was fighting at the standards of a late-stage class five, and that was without taking into account of Xiao Qi's usage of the Spatial Edge.

In another battle, Xiao Qi had used the Spatial Edge to kill yet another early-stage class six greenwood wolf. While not as impressive since the blue-eyes wyrm had been distracting it, the attack had still been a one-hit kill on the wolf, much to Bai Yunfei's surprise.

Xiao Qi rarely used the Spatial Edge to fight, but it was doing so in this battle almost freely. Clearly, the hatred left behind by the killer of Xiao Qi's mother had been strong enough for Xiao Qi to take it out on the wolf's entire race.

Bai Yunfei didn't want Xiao Qi to be completely overwhelmed by its emotions, but he knew that the bird needed some time by itself

to readjust and recover from the emotional ordeal it went through recently.

He did however, give words of comfort and motivation to Xiao Qi, which seemed to have taken a very apparent and positive effect on the bird. The day it killed the wolf, Xiao Qi was sullen beyond belief, but it slowly recovered its usual vibrancy over the course of the days after that, showing a strong mental growth. But from time to time, Bai Yunfei would be able to see a pondering light in the bird's eyes, though he never asked the bird about it.

All in all, the past month passed by without much trouble. Having spent every day training, Bai Yunfei estimated his strength would soon be back at the limits of a late-stage Soul Ancestor.

Rather than his strength being the unexpected one, it was Xiao Qi's strength that was the most surprising. After killing a second early-stage class six greenwood wolf and eating its soulgem, there was yet another substantial boost in strength.

From Bai Yunfei's observations, Xiao Qi was already half of the way there to becoming a late-stage class five!

This time, Bai Yunfei had some evidence to back up his previous guesses.

Each time Xiao Qi killed, there was a strange energy that'd appear and increase its strength rapidly.

For the following time after that discovery, Xiao Qi killed several dozen soulbeasts. And by the time one month was up, Xiao Qi was already standing at the peak of what a late-stage class five soulbeast could attain!

In other words, it was the same level of strength as Bai Yunfei now!

Only two months passed since Xiao Qi was born, and yet it was a late-stage class five soulbeast ready to breakthrough!

While not completely unique in the world of soulbeasts, only a

few soulbeasts had a level of talent this great.

Some of the soulbeasts were naturally born at the class four or five level, whether this may be due to their bloodline, or an inheritance of sort.

Having either of the two factor in their strength was where soulbeasts shined over soul cultivators.

But the most important thing was that Xiao Qi was a....prisma oriole! An 'inferior' soulbeast that required many dozen years in order to become a class five soulbeast!

And yet, the length of time it took Xiao Qi to do the same would've sent waves throughout the entire soul cultivator world if they heard about it!

Bai Yunfei was no stranger to how strange it was with improving so rapidly, though. Xiao Qi had already given him plenty of surprises, so its rate of improvement only felt 'right' to him and was quite the joy for him.

There was some concern from Bai Yunfei when Xiao Qi's strength was stalled at the very edge of the late-stage class five level.

Prisma orioles were known to only be able to grow to a late-stage class five soulbeast. In other words, their potential reached only so far. If that was true, it didn't matter how fast Xiao Qi improved if it would plateau in strength from there.

But it was a little too early to say a thing. Xiao Qi had only just reached the limit, so Bai Yunfei could only watch anxiously for the results.

After all, Xiao Qi had long surpassed what he expected from an ordinary 'prisma oriole'. What future achievements Xiao Qi might have, Bai Yunfei was sure he'd be very excite to see them.

.....

"Alright, Xiao Lan. Stop in front of that hill and take a break."

The sun was already nearing the highest point in the skies. Having noticed this, Bai Yunfei pointed the wyrm over to the side for it to stop by the several dozen meter tall hill for the day.

Somewhat in a good mood today, Xiao Qi chirped once first before flying forwards. Circling twice around the hill, it came down to a tree and chirped several times at Bai Yunfei to say that the place was safe to camp in.

Nearing the bottom of the hill, Bai Yunfei patted the top of the wyrm's head, "Shrink yourself a little, Xiao Lan. You're a little too noticeable right now."

He dismounted from the wyrm first, allowing the wyrm to freely start to glow in light. Continuing to shrink in size, the wyrm continued to grow smaller and smaller before reaching a height that was barely at Bai Yunfei's waist.

In the end, it was roughly a hundred times smaller than what it was before.

A disproportionately large head, small claws, long tail, and eyes that were noticeably large.

Even though it had shrunk proportionally in size, the previously fearsome blue-eyes wyrm was now looking a great deal more 'cuter', looking similar to a chibi plush toy, in fact....

Bai Yunfei nodded in satisfaction at the new size of the wyrm. He scratched its head in reward before turning towards the hill. A look of helplessness was still in the wyrm's eyes, but it followed Bai Yunfei with its tail slowly wagging behind.

The trees in this area were far more sparse in numbers, and the top of the hill was high enough to poke up above from the rest of the trees below, revealing a blanket of green that expanded for miles on end.

Thanks to his extraordinary eyesight, Bai Yunfei was able to locate a small lake and stream where he made a mental remark to

head towards later.

The thigh of a soulbeast was taken out from Bai Yunfei's space ring. Nearly fifty kilograms in weight, Bai Yunfei started the cumbersome task of preparing it for lunch while Xiao Qi and Xiao Lan stared off from the sides with drool leaking out from their mouths.

In the case of Xiao Lan, the disgraceful status it was in now had only one special benefit in that it could eat delicious foods like this.

Of course, it was only enough to fulfill its cravings. If it really wanted to eat its full, it'd have to head out and hunt for itself.

The meal was eaten without distraction and in peace. After it, Bai Yunfei sat upon the grassy grounds with a map of the Soulbeast Forest in one hand and a jade slip in the other. Carefully, he marked down everything he had traveled upon that day onto the map.

Ever since he entered the class six area of the forest, Bai Yunfei tried his best to fill in the blanks of the map given to him by writing down the terrain of the forest or any other markings that might detail the situation of the soulbeasts there.

Either way, it was done in hopes of helping him prepare for the future if he needed it.

Not too far away, the chibi blue-eyes wyrm was laying on the ground to bask in the sun. Ever since it started 'following' Bai Yunfei, it was finally able to experience what it was like to 'enjoy life'.

Meanwhile, Xiao Qi was flying around the skies as if working off the meal.

.....

“Chirp!!!”

Then out of nowhere, the sudden chirp of Xiao Qi snapped Bai

Yunfei out from his notes!

Rising to his feet, Bai Yunfei looked towards the source of the chirp, where he could see Xiao Qi chirping happily for some reason just barely a kilometer away.

Relieved that there was no danger to be seen, Bai Yunfei relaxed. It seemed that Xiao Qi had discovered something, so with that in mind, Bai Yunfei took out the Tempest Sword and pulled the chibi blue-eyes wyrm onto it to fly towards Xiao Qi's position.

He came to a short stop right by Xiao Qi's side soon after, "What's up, Xiao Qi?"

"Chirp chirp~!" Xiao Qi chirped twice, pointing its beak forwards.

Following its look, Bai Yunfei turned his head to look several hundred meters ahead where a sheer cliff wall was. All over the cliff was a green mass of what appeared to be a variety of plant life.

Registering some of the botanical life in his eyes, Bai Yunfei looked stunned for a moment.

"Those are...."

Chapter 416: Thunderberry

Already an extraordinary amount of time was spent by Bai Yunfei in this forest—the class six area alone took up a tremendous part of it. In that time, Bai Yunfei was fortunate enough to come across plenty of botanical treasures of considerable worth for even Soul Exalts.

This area was already well known by all soul cultivators for being a veritable treasure trove of medicines and herbs, so many soul cultivators traded what botanical treasures they found for primal stones.

But what treasures those soul cultivators might've found before, they would've paled in comparison to what Bai Yunfei was staring at, like a head of cabbage compared to a very old patch of ginseng.

“A thunderberry!!” Bai Yunfei's eyes were glued to the small patch of purple light on the cliff wall, his mouth only being capable of saying those two words.

Thunderberries were a rare sort of herb of the lightning variety. In a way, they were similar to the ‘fireberry’ Bai Yunfei had once ingested before.

The berry was a kilometer away from him, but he could feel the elemental lightning swimming through the air very distinctly, meaning that this particular thunderberry was ripened to a marvelously old age of a thousand years at the very least!

If Bai Yunfei had to appraise the tier of the thunderberry, then he could say with some confidence that it'd merit a grade of being a low-heaven tier ingredient!

Thunderberries were quite special on how they matured. For hundreds of years, they'd be practically indistinguishable compared to any other ordinary berry until one got within a meter close to it. Without that distance, it'd be almost impossible to tell

what it was.

And not only were they rare, they were also small in size, making it even harder to find them. Only after a thunderberry reached an age of a thousand would it start to emit its true worth as an ingredient.

Bai Yunfei was by no means an expert on telling how old a thunderberry was. But there were a few things to consider. Since the aura a thunderberry emitted wasn't hard to find, it'd be rather hard to avoid. Furthermore, since this was the Soulbeast Forest, there were plenty of soulbeast's that'd wander around this particular area.

With those two factors combined, there was only a few reasons why this thunderberry hadn't been eaten yet.

Either it had only just matured a while ago, or a powerful 'master' was protecting the thunderberry from anyone that'd dare try to eat it.

The chances of the latter was quite high, but since Bai Yunfei had stumbled across it, he wouldn't let the chance go without a proper reason!

The thunderberry wasn't very useful for him personally, but Xiao Qi would see plenty of benefit! If Xiao Qi were to eat the thunderberry, Bai Yunfei was sure that he'd be able to find out if Xiao Qi was at its limits or not!

Xiao Qi was very clearly thinking of the same thing as Bai Yunfei. As soon as it saw the thunderberry and chirped to let Bai Yunfei know, it was already flitting around the air impatiently.

While impatient, Xiao Qi wasn't so impatient that it'd charge in. The area in front of them was uncharted territory where danger might lurk if they weren't careful.

Visibility couldn't be relied upon with how far away the mountain was, but Bai Yunfei could at least count on his soulsense

to map out the place. Only a few dozen class five soulbeasts seemed to exist within several kilometers radius of the cliff wall, but aside from that, there didn't seem to be any powerful soulbeasts near the thunderberry.

“Strange....”

Doubt entered Bai Yunfei's mind. It was suspicious that there'd be no danger here.

Most of the more valuable materials and ingredients he found in the Soulbeast Forest so far had been guarded by an especially powerful soulbeast in the area, so he found it strange that the thunderberry wouldn't have a soulbeast protecting it as well.

“Let's get closer and see.” Bai Yunfei decided. Urging his Tempest Sword forward, he and Xiao Qi flew closer to where the thunderberry was.

From a kilometer, they gradually shortened the distance until they came to a stop a hundred meters away.

Even now, Bai Yunfei couldn't find anything strange in his surroundings.

“Is my luck really just that good?” He began to think. His soulsense was coming up with nothing strange even after multiple scans, prompting Bai Yunfei to walk fifty meters closer to the thunderberry.

“There's a cave?” Upon spotting the cave, Bai Yunfei began to grow wary once more. The cave had been hidden a bunch of tall grass growing this way and that, but with his soulsense, he was able to detect a ten meter tall cave hidden behind them.

With how tall the grass had grown in front of the cave, Bai Yunfei first thought that it had been abandoned a long time ago.

But for the sake of making sure, Bai Yunfei probed inside the cave with his soulsense.

If there was nothing in the cave, then he'd turn back, take the berry, and leave.

“Skree!!!!”

No sooner did Bai Yunfei's soulsense enter the cave did an ear-piercing shriek come echoing out the cave!!

“Boom!!”

A brilliant gleam of purple light flooded the entirety of the cave following the screech. Traveling through the corridors of the cave, it disintegrated the entirety of the tallgrass in front of the cave with a burst of elemental energy before zipping out of the cave like a lightning bolt to attack Bai Yunfei!

“Tsk!! I knew it wasn't going to be that easy!” Bai Yunfei howled to himself. He had been hopeful that such an event wouldn't happen, but he was prepared nonetheless. The Cataclysmic Seal materialized shortly afterwards and erected a barrier to protect him and Xiao Qi.

“Boom!!!”

Another burst of elemental lightning collided against the barrier, but unlike what he expected, Bai Yunfei was thrown off to the sides from the blast!

Combined with the second fireseed, the barrier erected by the Cataclysmic Seal was stronger than normal, but faced against the strike just now, it had been nearly destroyed instantaneously!!

If he had just used the barrier without the second fireseed, then the barrier wouldn't have even slowed down the attack before being destroyed!

Recognizing that fact, Bai Yunfei was quick to make several leaps away. He was no stranger to ambushes like these and was usually quick to react. The miniaturized blue-eyes wyrm was thrown to the ground with a flash of light. Crashing to the ground, it returned to its full size and roared aloud in preparation to fight.

Meanwhile, the second fireseed within the Cataclysmic Seal was already floating out from the Cataclysmic Seal. Flashing through a dozen hand seals from a safe distance away, Bai Yunfei allowed for the fireseed to enter his body, granting him more power!

Dual Flame Art: 'Coil' Form!

“Chirp!!!!” Alongside Bai Yunfei, Xiao Qi prepped itself for battle as well. Elemental fire, wood, wind, and lightning spun around its body like individual rings, showing off power that wasn't any weaker than an early-stage class six soulbeast.

Only three or four seconds had passed since the purple figure came jettisoning out from the caves. With how many battles Bai Yunfei had taken part in, getting ready to battle in such a short amount of time was to be expected, especially when being ambushed.

On the other side, the figure retreated a few meters away after it attacked, hovering in the air long enough for Bai Yunfei to see.

“A thunderwing bat!!” His eyes widened upon identifying the soulbeast, “It's....it's at the peak late-stage class six level too!!”

Bai Yunfei expected to fight a powerful enemy when he first found the thunderberry, but he didn't think it'd be this strong of a foe. If anything, a soulbeast this strong should be the strongest in the entire class six area and should've been farther in the forest, not here!

Standing at six meters tall and two meters wide, the bat's wingspan was more than ten meters in length when fully extended. Talons as sharp as eagle claws were at the tip of its wings, teeth just as sharp adorned the jaw of the bat, and ears that were equally pointy stood at the top of its head. Its eyes shined a purple hue slightly different to the purple coloration of its body.

All in all, while it didn't look all too different from any other bat, it was still extremely terrifying to look at.

And every so often, streams of lightning would stream out from the bat's wings to arc around the bat slowly.

“Damnit, I didn't think there'd be a soulbeast like this here! No wonder there weren't any other soulbeasts here, this thunderberry was being protected by it....

“Should I....fight it? Or should I run?”

He had mistaken this encounter with the thunderberry was a blessing, but perhaps it'd be more accurate to say it was a curse. Fighting with the thunderfire wolf from Xing Yuan was more than enough for Bai Yunfei to understand just how strong these type of soulbeasts were. He had no confidence in beating one of them, so it'd be better for him to leave now.

“Skreee!!!!”

But there'd be no way that the thunderwing bat would let Bai Yunfei enough time to even think. With a screech, it transformed into a bolt of lightning and flew straight for him!

Chapter 417: Thunderwing Bat

Needless to say, thunderwing bats were flight-capable soulbeasts with an affinity for lightning. In terms of intelligence, they ranked rather low, but their battle prowess was anything but. Only a few of them were capable of reaching the class six level, but not once had there been one that reached the class seven level.

Meeting with one that was at the peak of the late-stage class six area only meant that this bat in particular had been alive for a lengthy amount of time.

Becoming a class seven was the goal of the bat. Even if it meant surpassing the natural limits of its species, the bat would do whatever it took to do it. The entirety of its life was spent in pursue of this goal, killing any soulbeast or soul cultivator that'd dare enter its area.

After countless years of training, it was on the edge of it all. It'd become one of the kings of the Soulbeast Forest, and death wouldn't stop it from reaching its goal.

Several dozen years ago, it stumbled across this thunderberry and took it as a sign from the heavens. A golden opportunity that'd have a one in a thousand chance if anything, but an opportunity nonetheless.

Killing the mid-stage class six soulbeast that lived there, the bat claimed the territory as its own. From there on, the surrounding several kilometer area became its demesne, and any soulbeast that tried to enter would be killed

Soon enough, very few soulbeasts dared to even set foot there.

Dozens of years passed since then. The thunderberry wasn't yet ripe, and the thunderwing bat was in a semi state of hibernation.

It was adjusting its body for the most optimal time to ingest the thunderberry. With it not being ripe yet, it could wait for a good

chance to make a breakthrough.

For years now, the area it lived in was essentially a forbidden zone to any other soulbeast. With no soulbeast daring to set foot here, the thunderberry continued to grow without trouble.

That was.....until today.

The thunderwing bat didn't know much about the world, but it didn't need to. All it needed to know was that any and every invader and would-be plunderers of the thunderberry would die!!

.....

Bai Yunfei's face paled. The fact that the thunderwing bat was attacking him right now meant that it wouldn't let him go even if he tried to flee.

In other words, he'd have to stay and fight!

"Attack!" He cried out, calling the Cataclysmic Seal forward.

Since the Cataclysmic Seal's barrier was useless, that left only one other option....transformation!

It started to expand in size as it whistled through the air, by thirty meters, it was already as large as the cliff to try and smash against the bat!

As that went on, Bai Yunfei did his best to lengthen the distance between him and the bat. In order to observe how the bat fought, he'd need time and space.

"Chirp!!"

Several meters overhead, Xiao Qi spread its wings wide, elemental fire surrounding its body to become like a phoenix. When it fully gathered enough energy, a storm of fireballs began to rain down within a ten meter radius of the bat!

"Houuu!!!"

Down below, the blue-eyes wyrm unleashed a bolt of elemental

water to attack as well!

Faced against attacks from three different angles, the bat still didn't have any intentions of slowing down. Wrapping itself in elemental energy, it struck against the Cataclysmic Seal like a bolt of lightning!

“Boom!!!!”

With an ear-rupturing explosion, the thunderwing bat accomplished the very same feat the thunderfire wolf had done....knocking the Cataclysmic Seal back in the opposite direction!

Bai Yunfei had only retreated a good distance away when he saw the Cataclysmic Seal rebounding back. Narrowing his eyes, he had the Cataclysmic Seal shrink back to its normal size, only to see another bolt of purple lightning come straight at him!

Purple light traveled down the wings of the bat. After knocking back the Cataclysmic Seal, the bat hovered there a hundred meters up to dodge the attacks of Xiao Qi and Xiao Lan.

Gifted with a brief respite from the attacks, the bat began to glow with a dazzling light. Elemental lightning flickered in small streams from its wings as it folded in on the bat, and when it was fully charged, the bat's wings extended outwards again, shooting hundreds of purple lightning bolts to attack all three of its enemies!

Bai Yunfei clicked his teeth in annoyance. In response, the Cataclysmic Seal pulsed with light before erecting a barrier around Bai Yunfei. The bolts of lightning struck the barrier one after another, bringing ripples against the barrier, but the barrier endured it all. With its ample defenses, Bai Yunfei was fully protected.

Green and purple light flickered across Xiao Qi's body as it flitted in between the streaks of lightning to try and avoid being hit. On

the ground below, Xiao Lan was in a far worse of a state trying to bumble left and right. Several bolts of light had already left black scorch marks on its scales and a painful roar from the wyrm's mouth, but the wyrm was not too injured to be unable to continue fighting.

Roughly eighty percent of the lightning bolts were aimed towards Bai Yunfei. Of the three combatants, the bat recognized Bai Yunfei to be the hardest to deal with. So Xiao Lan and Xiao Qi were both written off as unimportant targets.

The bat paused briefly after the surge of lightning to charge up. Already, elemental lightning was being drawn into the bat for another attack. Concentrating in larger and larger amounts, the elemental lightning was quick to form a ball of lightning roughly the size of a water jar. Once fully formed, the bat fired the ball with a screech, sizzling through the air in hot pursuit of Bai Yunfei!

A hand reached out to the Cataclysmic Seal, activating the barrier effect from it again.

When the ball of lightning struck against the barrier, it was immediately broken apart like glass!

“Damn!” Bai Yunfei cursed. The angle it was coming at made evasion extremely difficult. He was more than capable enough of evading the ball, but if he did, then the attack would continue downwards and strike the blue-eyes wyrm instead.

And if that happened, the wyrm would die without a doubt!

Indecision danced about in his eyes as Bai Yunfei debated his options, but he soon came to a decision.

Evasion was not an option here.

His right arm flew up to face the ball of lightning with the palm, and his left hand clutched at the wrist of his right. Energy gathering from his body was fed into the Ardent Sun Glove worn on his right hand at an accelerated rate, drawing elemental fire

into the space in front of his palm. In no time, a fireball a meter large in circumference was fully formed and ready to go!

It whirled in the air to counteract against the lightning ball, but compared to that, the fireball was lacking in speed.

Barely before any distance was had between the fireball and Bai Yunfei's fist, the ball of lightning had already descended onto it!

“Boom!!!!”

The forces of nature crashed against each other head on, rapidly disintegrating the fireball Bai Yunfei casted. Upon contact with it, the lightning ball dissipated into a shock wave of elemental lightning that rippled through the air. Only with quick thinking did Bai Yunfei protect himself with the Cataclysmic Seal, but he was forced to retreat a hundred meters away to safety while Xiao Lan on the ground was sent flying through several trees.

Two attacks ago, Bai Yunfei had been standing several hundred meters up into the air. But now, he was sent down two hundred meters without even being able to launch a counter attack.

This lack of action didn't go unnoticed by the thunderwing bat. Screeching again when it saw Bai Yunfei dodge its attack, it shot for Bai Yunfei in a spurt of elemental lightning enhanced speed!

“Chirp!!”

From elsewhere, Xiao Qi chirped furiously. Elemental wind gathered around its wings as it charged up to become hundreds of blades of wind to strike down the bat mid-flight.

Despite being true to its aim, the blades of elemental wind failed to do any harm to the bat! Neglecting to even bother dodging them, the bat covered itself in a bubble of elemental lightning and allowed the blades to bounce harmlessly against it!

Met with the uncontested charge of the bat, Bai Yunfei fed his soulforce into the Cataclysmic Seal to summon the strongest barrier it could muster, and his right hand bringing out his Fire-

tipped Spear.

The thunderwing bat was practically within striking distance now. Its claws twinkled a brilliant sheen of purple as it ripped at the barrier, tearing it apart without trouble!

And when its claws came up again to rend Bai Yunfei's head from his shoulders, the Fire-tipped Spear of Bai Yunfei came up to try and perforate the bat's heart through its chest!

Chapter 418: A Miscalculation!

The thought of evading the bat's claws didn't even register in Bai Yunfei's mind as he gripped his spear. When it came at his head, Bai Yunfei immediately launched an attack at the bat's heart!

“Skreee!!”

The bat screeched again in recognition of this attack, but it didn't give up its attack plan. Flapping its wings briefly, it tilted its body to the side for the spear to stab into its left 'shoulder' while its claws shifted slightly to attack Bai Yunfei's heart!

Letting the spear stab it's body was extremely painful for the bat, but it was only a wound and nothing serious.

If its claws were to be true, then Bai Yunfei's heart would be torn out from his chest!

But.

There was something important about the spear touching the bat.

With the spear successfully stabbing the bat, that meant....

“Boom!!!”

Merely half an inch away from Bai Yunfei's chest, the claws of the bat was suddenly halted by an explosion!

Screeching loudly in pain, the bat was forced away from him due to the blast!

+10 Additional effect of the Fire-tipped Spear, explosion!

Activation of this effect was practically guaranteed with the Ninefold Stab; and with this, the bat would be dealt a serious blow!

A serious blow it was, but it wasn't enough to be fatal!

True to its name as a peak late-stage class six soulbeast, the bat brought its soulforce up just in time to bear the brunt of its attacks.

While it endured the attack, the explosion was enough to knock it away from Bai Yunfei in a trail of blood, with bone capable of being seen from its wound!

“Xiao Qi!!”

Bai Yunfei didn't expect for the explosion to kill the bat. Once the explosion happened, he roared out loud for Xiao Qi while he took a step back.

The empathic understanding between Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi was beyond the levels of most. His callout to the bird was more than enough for it to understand what Bai Yunfei was getting at.

Chirping loudly in response, Xiao Qi flapped its wings furiously, materializing a pitch-dark crescent moon-shaped blade to strike down the bat!

Spatial Edge!

“Skreee!!!!”

Fear flooded the eyes of the bat for the first time in this battle. It had surely not expected Xiao Qi to be capable of an attack this powerful. Gathering soulforce into its wings, it tried its best to retreat and flee to the right!

But....it was a bit too late to dodge! Just barely after it shifted itself, the Spatial Edge made contact with its legs, decapitating the bottom half of its legs from the bat's body!

“Skreee!!!”

Pain unlike anything it had ever felt before flooded the nerves of the bat. Screeching, it flew several hundred meters away before coming to a stop in the air. It stared down to the ground where the Spatial Edge fell in the forest, only to see a large crescent moon-shaped hole there.

After that, only joy was felt by the bat, happy that it wasn't hit by it.

Then, fury and hatred started to fill the bat in endless waves. After living for over a hundred years uncontested in strength, it was finally being injured by three enemies who were barely above the level of a mid-stage class six.

It was a disgrace the bat was unable to accept!

It screeched in preparation to tear him to pieces and devour the remaining pieces!

Its hate-filled eyes moved over to Xiao Qi. It'd have to change its tactics to attack the one who was capable of attacking with such a powerful move.

But as it prepared itself to fly towards the bird, the whirring of something else caused it to pause briefly and look down only to see two giant dragons barreling towards it!

Dual Dragon Burst!!

Like the explosion, Bai Yunfei didn't expect the Spatial Edge to land the finishing blow onto the bat. As soon as Xiao Qi activated the skill, Bai Yunfei was already going through several hand seals to attack at the bat with his most powerful move!

An explosion to Spatial Edge to Dual Dragon Burst.

The three attacks were unleashed seamlessly so as to avoid giving the bat any time to think about dodging, only defending!

The amount of area the Dual Dragon Burst covered was far bigger than the Spatial Edge, meaning that the bat wouldn't have any room to dodge like it did with the previous attack. With how experienced it was in battle, the bat knew that as well.

Left with no other choice, the bat furled its wings in front of itself in an attempt to protect itself along with a bubble of elemental energy!

“Boom!!!”

With the Dual Dragon Burst covering such a large area, it soon

engulfed the bat and its bubble of energy. Passing through it like a river flowing over a stone, the remaining energy washed over onto the next-door mountain, crumbling it to bits!

Coincidentally, the thunderberry was within the collapsing area!

“Xiao Qi, we’re going!!”

What Bai Yunfei was aiming for wasn’t the death of the thunderwing bat, but escape. The Dual Dragon Burst was merely meant as an opening for Bai Yunfei to release the Tempest Sword and use the Compliant Rope to snag Xiao Lan with it to run away. Shining in light when the rope touched it, Xiao Lan shrunk back to its miniature-sized shape before it was sent sailing into the air back towards Bai Yunfei.

The Tempest Sword shined brightly with green light as it charged up with power before taking Bai Yunfei and Xiao Lan through the air away from the bat!

Traveling at speeds not slower than the Tempest Sword, Xiao Qi wasn’t going for safety with Bai Yunfei, but the....cliffside!

Flying swiftly like a dragonfly flitting across the waters, Xiao Qi touched upon the ground near the cliffs before taking off after Bai Yunfei, a purple-colored stem in its beak.

This particular piece of vegetation was the....thunderberry!

A triumphant smile appeared on Bai Yunfei’s face when he saw the object in Xiao Qi’s beak. Activating the additional effect of the sword, he started to fly even faster away from the area!

“Skree!!!”

Hatred like none other spilled out from the middle of the vortex caused by the Dual Dragon Burst. Streaks of lightning splashed out from the area, dispersing the fire with elemental lightning with it and destroying a nearby mountain point!

Sparks of purple filled the bat’s eyes, highlighting them with a

streak of malevolent hatred. Its wings were tattered and blood was pouring out from various parts of its body, but the purple lighting to its body made it a very gruesome sight to behold. The wound left by Bai Yunfei's spear on its left shoulder was already staining the immediate area around it crimson red with blood.

The sight of Bai Yunfei thousands of meters away gave the bat no small amount of fury; screeching with indignation, it unfurled its wings and shot for him like a bat out of hell!

Its soulforce was pulsating strangely now. Its jaws opened wide to reveal the bat's sharp teeth. In between, elemental lightning was taking material form as a lightning bolt to travel and strike down Bai Yunfei!

After shooting the bolt of lightning, the bat didn't bother to shut its jaw. Instead, the lower half of it shook slightly before a strange vibration started to emit outwards at equally fast speeds.

Not expecting the bat to recover so quickly, Bai Yunfei was only just taking the thunderberry from Xiao Qi when he felt the bolt of lightning approach him. Right as he was about to feed even more soulforce into the Tempest Sword, his entire body was suddenly overcome by a dizzying sensation!

"A mental attack!!" Bai Yunfei realized. He didn't know that the thunderwing bat was capable of that!

The slip-up was only for a second, but that second was enough to lose him the chance to evade!

The purple bolt of lightning struck against Bai Yunfei's barrier like an arrow, shattering it like glass before stabbing into his back!!

"Pftch!"

Blood spurted out from Bai Yunfei's mouth. The strength of the lightning bolt after breaking past his barrier had been stronger than he anticipated. Even the Soulsilk Armor protecting him had been stabbed straight through, since he felt the elemental

lightning from the attack start to flood his body, giving him the sensation as if a blade of lightning was cutting into him!

The pain had been so immense he nearly fell off from the Tempest Sword

Even worse, the thunderwing bat was half a kilometer away from him now!

Chapter 419: A Serious Injury

Bai Yunfei knew he wasn't a match for the thunderwing bat, hence why he tried his best to run away at first.

He just never imagined that even after fleeing for such a long distance, the thunderwing bat would be able to inflict such a heavy wound onto him!

Feeling the elemental lightning wreck havoc onto his body, the numbing sensation of it was starting to take away the freedom of mobility from Bai Yunfei. If this went on, then he'd be heavily hampered for the rest of the battle, and the elemental lightning would persist to do even more internal damage to him.

The pain he was feeling now was more than enough to kill the normal person, but Bai Yunfei's pain tolerance surpassed the average person, so he was able to bear the pain with just a grunt.

Due to the aftereffects of being hit by the lightning, Bai Yunfei's control over the Tempest Sword dipped a bit, meaning it was starting to slow down enough for the thunderwing bat to catch up!

“Chirp!!”

Infuriated by Bai Yunfei's injury, Xiao Qi's entire body flashed in red light before summoning countless fireballs to streak down towards the thunderwing bat.

And amidst the firestorm was the Spatial Edge!

Putting so much energy into that lightning bolt had seemingly weakened the bat, as the purple light around it was noticeably fainter than before. Undeterred, it continued onwards with no regard with the firestorm, but it still had to dodge the Spatial Edge. Flapping its wings, it ascended ten meters over the attack to let it sail harmlessly underneath it.

But then when it came up, a second Spatial Edge appeared in front of it!

Right after casting the first Spatial Edge, Xiao Qi had a second one fly after it!

“Skree!!”

This time, a panicked screech came from the bat. Tilting its body, it flew like lightning ten meters to the left, dodging the second Spatial Edge at the cost of losing all forward momentum it had built up so far.

Bai Yunfei was only just spitting out a second mouthful of blood on the other hand. The complexion of his face was gradually growing better and his escape was starting to get back on track. Thankfully, the bat’s attack was only light enough to cause a momentary loss of control rather than being unflushable from his body with soulforce.

But still, if nothing was done about the bat, it’d still be able to catch up....

“Tsk, looks like I’ll have to use that move again!”

At the same time he thought that, Xiao Qi was already launching the two Spatial Edges at the bat.

Turning so that he’d be facing the bat with his front rather than his back, Bai Yunfei had the Compliant Rope coil itself around his fist so that he’d be free to use both of his hands.

The bat was only just dodging the second Spatial Edge when Bai Yunfei finished a series of complicated hand seals. The soulforce in him hitched upwards irregularly upon the last hand seal being done before the elemental fire in him started to shake and undergo a transformation....

The hand seals he did were to reactivate the ‘Coil’ form to grant him the strength of an early-stage Soul Exalt...meaning that he’d gain a power up!

In just one mere second, the strength inside Bai Yunfei was already at the levels of a mid-stage Soul Exalt!!

Veins of blood started to grow more apparent on the wide-open eyes of Bai Yunfei following this change. His teeth gritted together seemingly in pain as he concentrated solely on the bat in front of him. His hands had been a blur as it moved from seal to seal without stop!

Only when he landed upon the final hand seal did Bai Yunfei's hands take a familiar-looking shape—it was the seal for the Dual Dragon Burst!

Another second was all it took for a magnificent fire to roar to life around both of his arms to take shape as two large dragons of fire!

It was then that the thunderwing bat was successfully able to dodge the second Spatial Edge to renew its pursuit after the three!

Pained by the amount of exertion needed for this attack, Bai Yunfei punched both hands forward!

Dual Dragon Burst!

There was a stark difference between this Dual Dragon Burst and the one from before. The trails of fire left behind by the dragons were mixing in with one another as normal, but there was a strangely powerful energy that'd appear for a moment whenever the one-meter thick dragons intertwined with one another to attack the bat!

“Skreee!!”

Memories of this move caused the bat to screech again in fear. Its wings flapped rapidly to give the bat enough force to ascend higher into the skies.

By the skin of its teeth, the bat was able to evade the two dragons, but then as it was at the highest point of its evasive maneuver, Bai Yunfei's arms formed yet another hand seal!

Detaching from one another, the two dragons bent at a right angle to sandwich the bat in between before coming at one another

to smash the bat!

Like it had done with Xing Yuan, the two dragons would now attempt to engulf the bat in the ensuing explosion when the two dragons collide!

It forced Xing Yuan to try and protect himself to the best of his ability, and this time, the thunderwing bat would have to rely again on its heaven-gifted instincts to help it!

Right before the point of collision, the bat was desperately flapping its wings to gather energy in front of its one remaining leg to fire off for additional propulsion!

Due to the positioning of the dragons, the bat gave up its pursuit forward in favor of a backwards retreat, and with one final attempt, it just barely managed to dodge the two dragons!

“Boom!!!”

Elemental fire cascaded everywhere following the blast, smashing against the bird and forcing it to spiral out of control through the air!

Thanks to that explosion, an even bigger wedge of distance was driven between Bai Yunfei and the bat.

“Tsk!” A regretful tut escaped from Bai Yunfei’s mouth; but his actions didn’t slow down in the slightest. Calling Xiao Qi to him, he powered up the Tempest Sword and flew off.

“Damnit, if only I knew! I’d have used my strongest move at the very beginning! There wasn’t a need to wait for this long...” he mourned during his escape.

“Hrk!”

Just as several kilometers of distance was traveled, Bai Yunfei suddenly gasped. His face turned red as he was forced to spit out yet another mouthful of blood, but this time, a sliver of bloody steam was emitted from his mouth!

Realizing the effects of what was going on in his body, Bai Yunfei slammed a palm to his chest, ejecting the second fireseed from his body and depositing it back into his Cataclysmic Seal.

No sooner was the fireseed gone from his body did his aura dropped instantly back to the levels of a late-stage Soul Ancestor.

He grunted somewhat in relief when the fireseed was gone from his body and the redness in his face was starting to recede.

But rather than going back to normal, the color continued to bleed away from his face and his body shivered violently before falling forward!

“Chirp!”

Startled, Xiao Qi expanded in size to carefully grab hold of Bai Yunfei’s arms with its claws.

No longer under Bai Yunfei’s control, the Tempest Sword sputtered with light before starting to fall down to the ground, but thankfully, it was caught in the teeth of Xiao Lan before it could fall too far.

Panic was starting to set in on Xiao Qi’s eyes. Green and purple light shined simultaneously in its feathers as it tried to pick up speed. And with the aided power of elemental wind and lightning, it disappeared into a blur forward.

And just like this, Xiao Qi held onto Bai Yunfei while the Compliant Rope was still clutched tightly around Bai Yunfei’s arm to hold onto the Tempest Sword holding blue-eyes wyrm.

Carrying a human and soulbeast wasn’t too heavy of a burden for Xiao Qi. With hardly any time to waste, it was already a speck of light onto the horizon to try and leave the bat behind.

Meanwhile, the force of energy left behind by the collision of the Dual Dragon Burst had finally dissipated enough for the bat to screech and fly after Xiao Qi again!

Since it was injured, the bat was no longer able to continue flying at full strength, but it couldn't exactly give up Bai Yunfei either. He was injured and had the thunderberry with him, so how could the bat give it up!

Even if it meant chasing him to the ends of the forest, the bat was adamant on smiting this foe and devouring him whole!

Flying through the air as if its life depended on it, Xiao Qi flew around a mountain before turning around into another direction in an attempt to throw the bat off their trail.

From his safe position in Xiao Qi's claws, Bai Yunfei had a depressed look on his face. If not for the soulforce recovering effect of the Yun's Soul Ring and the support of his Soulsilk Armor, he would've fainted a long time ago. The elemental lightning in his body was gone for the most part, but the wounds left behind were by no means as easy to dismiss. Even now, breathing took a great deal more effort than before, and each time he coughed, a small amount of blood would come out.

No matter how far they traveled, the aura of the thunderwing bat was an ever constant presence.

Agonized annoyance flickered across Bai Yunfei's eyes. This time, they had really kicked the hornet's nest....

Chapter 420: Form a Soul Contract!! (First)

Every single time Bai Yunfei had to fight against an opponent that was stronger than him, he'd make sure to unleash his strongest move in order to buy enough time to run away. With his powerful soul skills and equipment effects, any enemy he fought was basically forced to watch as Bai Yunfei successfully ran away from them.

Any other soul cultivator would've died in ways completely unknown to them if they fought against Xing Yuan, for example. Bai Yunfei on the other hand could not only land lasting injuries onto him, but escape with his life as well.

Even against late-stage class six soulbeasts were used as tests for his strength--and after he did that, he'd run away--no harm no foul.

But as the saying goes; walk along the river long enough and your shoes will get wet.

Unfortunately for Bai Yunfei, right now was that unlucky moment for him.

And it wasn't a minor unfortunate event.

Reaching that cliff and approaching the thunderberry was the moment when Bai Yunfei realized that he was about to reach the biggest piece of trouble since he stepped foot in the Soulbeast Forest. Those soulbeasts who were on the verge of becoming class sevens like the thunderwing bat were far more than a match for him. He knew this, and thus why he tried to run away first, but things still went as expected anyways.

He got hurt. Quite seriously too.

The worse part was, even after paying such a heavy price, he wasn't out of the woods just yet.

.....

Over the course of the next half hour of Xiao Qi flying at the fastest speeds it could muster, countless distance had already been traveled.

No matter which way it turned to, it was never able to fully throw off the thunderwing bat of its trail. Every so often, Bai Yunfei would feel the bat's aura weaken for just a second, but then it'd come back shortly after.

If not for the long head start they had and the occasional detours Xiao Qi took, the thunderwing bat would've caught up with them a long time ago.

Things couldn't go on this way, though. Xiao Qi was already exhausted with how long it had been flying at the speeds it was at, and if it weren't for Bai Yunfei holding onto its talons to send some soulforce to it, Xiao Qi would've collapsed some time ago.

There was no helping it. Bai Yunfei was using the Yun's Soul Ring to recover soulforce, but most of that prioritized his own wounds.

He himself had used a laborious amount of soulforce already, so he needed to recover it all before it was too late for the both of them.

If it were just him, he could've dove into the Soulbeast Forest and used the Soul Concealment Art to conceal his soulforce. That way, hiding from the thunderwing bat would've been several degrees easier, but Xiao Qi and Xiao Lan weren't capable of that.

The thunderwing bat's soulsense was already locked onto their auras even from such a long distance away. All it needed to do was to head in their general direction and then make short work out of the two soulbeasts right afterwards.

On the other hand, Xiao Qi could've dropped Bai Yunfei so that it could go off into another direction to pull the bat after it, but Bai Yunfei wouldn't have allowed that.

“Damn damn dammit!! What should I do?!” Anxiety flooded his face as his soulforce circulated around his body. His mind was in a panicked mess as he tried to think of the next step to take, “We f*cked up and got hurt, we shouldn’t have tried to run away so early....no, we shouldn’t have even got close to the thunderberry to begin with!

“But now’s not the time to think about that!” He shook his head in an attempt to clear his mind, “Now that things have gotten this way, should we give the thunderberry back?

“No, with how injured it is, there’s definitely no way it’ll forgive us now....

“But we can’t keep on running away either, we can’t shake it off! Should we stop and fight? But how? I wouldn’t be able to defeat a peak late-stage class six soulbeast even if I was fully healed!

“There’s just far too big of a difference between us that my equipment and soul skills can’t even make up. A Soul Ancestor isn’t an opponent for them at all, if only I was stronger....

“If we can’t run, then we’ll have to fight! And if we fight, we fight to win! And if we win, we have to get stronger! Stronger than what we were before, I have to become Soul Exalt!”

One by one, thoughts flickered past his head, but the final thought made Bai Yunfei feel agonized over the impossibility of the task.

“Hold on! Breaking the bottleneck to become a Soul Exalt might not be impossible....” His eyes flickered first to the blue-eyes wyrm. “No, I can’t be careless. This won’t guarantee me a success.

“In that case....” The gears in his head turned slowly before Bai Yunfei looked up at Xiao Qi.

The light in his eyes were flickering madly now. When another screech was heard behind him, the light in his eyes grew even brighter, as if he had decided upon something.

Without anymore hesitation, Bai Yunfei pointed to a nearby mountain peak a kilometer away, “Xiao Qi, stop down there!”

“Chirp?”

This sudden request caught Xiao Qi off guard, but it didn’t bother to question him. Tilting its wings, Xiao Qi deviated from its flight to fly down to the mountain.

Settling on the ground, Bai Yunfei set Xiao Lan down before putting away the Compliant Rope. The coloration in his face was looking better now, but he sat down anyways for a moment to regulate his breathing. Looking up, he looked back at Xiao Qi who was staring anxiously at him.

“Xiao Qi, are you willing to travel and fight alongside me from now on as my partner?”

“Chirp?”

Again, Xiao Qi didn’t understand what Bai Yunfei was getting at, but this question was all the more puzzling to it.

‘Travel with Bai Yunfei’.

This was already something it was already doing ever since it arrived in this world. It was more knowledgeable about this world now, and far more mature than when it was conceived, but it never thought to question this notion before.

To follow Bai Yunfei was as natural as it was to breath, so what need was there to think twice about it?

Traveling together, fighting together, and to being partners or whatnot....isn’t that what it was doing already?

The confusion that was taking place in Xiao Qi’s mind was also being transmitted to Bai Yunfei, allowing him to see what it was thinking about.

“Haha....” Bai Yunfei chuckled, seemingly laughing at his own superfluous question.

Then, the smile was replaced with a serious but grim expression.

“Then....form a soul contract with me, Xiao Qi!!”

Chapter 421: Concluding a Soul Contract!!

(Second)

Soul contracts. An extremely important matter to both soul cultivator and soulbeast. Not only did it mean that neither parties would betray each other as lifelong partners, it also meant a very easy way to gain even more power!!

Jing Mingfeng broke the bottleneck to become a Soul Ancestor when he formed a soul contract with the wind squaller, and Tian Ming's father back in the Northern Cliff Province advanced a level when he formed a soul contract with the lightning eagle, for example.

But a soul contract could only happen once in the life of either parties, making it an extremely valuable event. Very few soul cultivators used this chance at a whim while the majority would use this chance only when to break the bottleneck they were at.

A soul contract was by no means a guaranteed opportunity to gain some strength. The higher the strength, the harder it was to grow significantly stronger.

For example, if a mid-stage Soul King were to form a soul contract with a class seven soulbeast, it'd be impossible for them to become a late-stage Soul King.

Zi Jin sent Bai Yunfei here to the Soulbeast Forest with that reason in mind. If there was a problem with Bai Yunfei's training, then he could form a soul contract and make the breakthrough to become a Soul Exalt. Bai Yunfei had other things in mind, however, as he didn't want to waste such a precious chance so easily. If he could become a Soul Exalt by his own merits, then he'd be able to earn a second burst of power afterwards with it.

Thus, forming a soul contract with any soulbeast wasn't too high on his priority list.

In his opinion, he was going to be staying in the forest for a long time anyways. There was no need to rush.

His relationship with Xiao Qi was an abnormal one, with their soul compatibility being at 75%. By normal means, this percentage was achievable only by a soul contract, but there was no such bond yet between Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi. The idea of forming one with Xiao Qi never occurred to Bai Yunfei, since he didn't fully understand the prisma oriole just yet—especially in regards to the potential of the bird.

Besides, if he found another soulbeast he could form a soul contract with, then he could say that Xiao Qi was his second soulbeast partner!

No matter which way he thought about it, this plan seemed like the most profitable to him.

But that plan had been tossed straight out of the window now that Bai Yunfei had stumbled across the thunderwing bat. Stuck in this quandary where escape was impossible and a battle to the death was inevitable, the only chance left for victory was to get stronger now!

And the only method to do that in such a short time frame was to form a soul contract.

It only took a second for Bai Yunfei to dismiss the notion of using the blue-eyes wyrm as his soulbeast partner. It wasn't suitable to be contracted with him, and he wasn't even sure if it'd even work.

Without the Beast Taming Ring, the blue-eyes wyrm had no other sentiments towards Bai Yunfei other than perhaps animosity. If so, then forming a soul contract with the soulbeast would be nigh impossible, and breaking the bottleneck would be out of his grasp.

To be more succinct, there was a level of 'degree' needed between both parties for a soul contract to succeed. It might be summarized

as the ‘soul compatibility’, or it might just be strength of a bond between the two. Either way, the higher the compatibility, the better chances of a better result.

Xiao Qi was for this reason, a different choice than the blue-eyes wyrm. There was nothing stopping him from forming a soul contract with it, and it was very likely that he’d get the highest level of benefits from doing so!

.....

A soul contract?

Xiao Qi skewed its head; it didn’t even know what a ‘soul contract’ even meant.

“It’s hard to explain right now, but you’ll understand once we form the contract.” Bai Yunfei spoke, reaching a hand to Xiao Qi’s head to stroke its feathers. “Calm yourself and follow where your soul leads you to.”

Agreeing to a soul contract is done instinctively. As long as the circumstances match up, a soul contract would occur; much like how Jing Mingfeng formed his soul contract with the wind squaller.

Already Bai Yunfei could feel his aura being homed in on by the thunderwing bat. It wouldn’t take long before the bat would get here, so if Bai Yunfei wanted a chance to defeat it, he’d need to form that soul contract now!

What Bai Yunfei was asking for confused Xiao Qi, but it hadn’t any reason to doubt him. Closing its eyes, Xiao Qi began to meditate and immerse itself into its soul.

Bai Yunfei did the same, allowing himself to forget about the outside world for a moment to be one with his soul.

Silence was had for several seconds before an abnormality occurred right as he touched upon the core of his soul!

“Bang!!”

Dazzling red light came pouring forth from Bai Yunfei’s body, materializing as elemental fire in the outside world to cover his entire body with it.

At the same time, Xiao Qi’s body was basked in four different glows of light, green, red, bluish-green, and purple. The elements of wood, fire, wind, and lightning were starting to form around it as well.

Soon, the two forces of elements collided with one another to form one brilliant pillar of energy!

Bai Yunfei’s right hand was still pressing the top of Xiao Qi’s head within this pillar of light. Both man and animal were completely still, but the energy rippling off their bodies were continuously pressing against each other to become one!

Everything was going smoothly like water. Not even a single obstruction was felt by Bai Yunfei as he continued to travel within his own soul to enter another. At the same time he was doing that, another soul was doing the same to him.

It was a subtle feeling, but not a strange one. Back in Gaoyi City of the Northern Cliff Province, he had nearly formed a soul contract with the lightning eagle there. While the contract didn’t successfully go through, Bai Yunfei still experienced what it was like.

Inside the confines of his soul, it felt like there was a hazy picture slowly taking form where both his and another soul was slowly being led to. Their souls moved with a trail that never seemed to fade, ultimately forming a mystical seal onto the picture .

The more this seal took form, the more Bai Yunfei felt like his mind was becoming more clear to Xiao Qi’s and vice versa; in fact, he began to feel like he could fully understand what emotions Xiao Qi was feeling right now—

Joy. Joy and devotion of the highest degree of innocence.

The conclusion of the soul contract went on without any issues. In the end, not even two minutes had gone by before Bai Yunfei felt the seals formed by the soul contract start to exude power, filling his entire body with an unbelievable amount of elemental fire!

As soon as the deluge of elemental fire started to pour into Bai Yunfei's body, the second fireseed in his Cataclysmic Seal popped out of it to dive into the origin acupoint of Bai Yunfei's body!

Due to the instinctive nature bred by Bai Yunfei's usage of the Dual Flame Arts, neither of the fireseeds fought with one another.

Instead, they hovered in place next to each other to start absorbing all of the elemental fire that came in.

Simultaneously, the soulforce within Bai Yunfei's body was rapidly increasing, and the wounds on his body were regenerating so quickly that his wounds were soon fully healed!

Chapter 422: Advancing to Become a Soul Exalt! (Third)

What would've taken a dozen days at the very least to heal had instead taken only a short ten seconds to completely recover from!

Even more remarkable was the amount of soulforce being outputted by Bai Yunfei....it was rapidly reaching the peak of what a late-stage Soul Ancestor was capable of, and it still wasn't stopping!

It was as though a dam inside Bai Yunfei's body. Rather than water, his soulforce was slamming into the dam one wave at a time, each next wave being more furious than the last!

And with each repeated collision, the dam was gradually being worn away!

More and more, the soulforce within Bai Yunfei started to change, not in how it fluctuated, but the quality of the soulforce itself. It was being renewed into soulforce of a completely higher level of nature....

Right in front of him, Xiao Qi was undergoing a very similar process as well!

Xiao Qi's entire body grew slightly larger with each second while all four elements within its body started to melt in with one another. More and more, its feathers took on a brighter sheen, and a substantially new type of aura was starting to come out from its body.....

Then when several moments passed by, the rings of light around the two became a pillar of dazzling light that shot straight up into the skies!

“Skree!!!”

Simultaneously, the shrill screeching of a bat echoed across the

skies before a bolt of lightning shot towards them.

The thunderwing bat had finally caught up!

“Grrrrr....” From its hiding spot behind a tree, the blue-eyes wyrm let loose a low growl of fear. It already knew that it wasn’t a match for the bat and desperately wanted to run. But for some unknown reason to it, it simply couldn’t leave Bai Yunfei behind.

That was the consequence of the Beast Taming Ring and its ‘pet loyalty’ effect.

It couldn’t deny that Bai Yunfei was strong. Its time under his command was more than enough to prove that. Though despite being unwillingly and knowingly controlled, the wyrm enjoyed it somewhat. With Bai Yunfei being able to ‘bully’ any of the mid-stage class six soulbeasts, the wyrm was able to ‘enjoy’ the experience of being on top for a while, but now that this bat was here, it knew that even Bai Yunfei was powerless to it.

So when this awe-inspiring pillar of elemental energy and aura blazed into the skies, anxious hope filled in the eyes of the wyrm.

While this meant that they’d be class six (and Soul Exalt) like itself after the breakthrough, the wyrm knew with Bai Yunfei’s strength, the three of them would finally have a chance to win this battle.

The screeches of the bat brought shivers up the spine of the blue-eyes wyrm. The anxiety in its eyes deepened as it took several instinctual steps backwards in fear, but then when the bat finally got close enough to be visible enough to the eye, the pillar of light nearby suddenly exploded apart!

“Boom!!!!”

With an ear-deafening explosion, the pillar of light gushed out from the center, creating a huge vortex of energy that swirled around and sucked in anything within its radius!

To the right half of the vortex was light as red as fire.

To the left were four lights that represented the elements of fire, wood, wind and lightning.

From a hundred meters, the two sides of the vortex continued to compress in on itself until it had a radius of only ten meters before then disappearing...into the bodies of Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi!

As soon as the vortex disappeared, another two powerful auras were immediately felt!

The auras of an early-stage Soul Exalt and....an early-stage class six soulbeast!

True to Bai Yunfei's expectations, he and Xiao Qi managed to surpass the bottleneck and breakthrough!

Any soul cultivator unlucky enough to be around would've fallen to the ground in absolute shock; this soul contract didn't even take five minutes to do!

Not only that, this soul contract had given an unbelievable power up to both parties!

The reason behind both those feats was due to the fact that Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi had a soul compatibility of 75%!

Shortly after the burst of soulforce subsided, both Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi reopened their eyes slowly to look at each other in joy.

"So...this is what being a Soul Exalt feels like?" Bai Yunfei looked down at his hand, basking in the sensation of his soulforce recirculate around his body. "And Xiao Qi, you broke through as well! Looks like I was worried about nothing...."

"Chirp chirp~!"

A warning chirp from Xiao Qi broke Bai Yunfei away from any further thought he had. "You're right," he smiled, "let's get rid of this bothersome pest first."

Standing upright, Bai Yunfei turned around to look at the bat. His hands flew into a blur as they went through a series of seals to

meld his soulforce within his body, and soon enough, the elemental fire in him began to exude off from his body in a huge fire.

Dual Flame Artes: ‘Coil’ Form!

Pausing briefly to activate the ‘Coil’ Form, Bai Yunfei took out the Fire-tipped Spear and brandished it menacingly.

His strength was now at the mid-stage Soul Exalt level!

“Chirp!!”

A melodic cry came forth from Xiao Qi as it basked itself in a magnificent glow of prismatic light. Beating its wings, it ascended higher into the skies where it started to grow in size. In seconds, its wingspan was now a length of ten meters, and the prismatic light previously covering its body was being overtaken by the crimson red light coming from within. When the prismatic light was fully overshadowed, elemental fire suddenly materialized over its body, turning Xiao Qi into a tremendous firebird.

“Roar!!” Down below, the gigantic blue-eyes wyrm came crashing through the forests to come to a stop in front of Bai Yunfei. Turning around, it aimed another furious roar at the thunderwing bat.

While their preparations for battle were being undertaken, the bolt of purple lightning that was the bat was already getting close. Shooting out a beam of purple lightning from its mouth, the bat followed up on the attack with a inaudible screech!

A mental attack!

Bai Yunfei narrowed his eyes in wariness; being hit by this attack would mean being left wide open to be attacked. Lifting his right hand up, he touched the Cataclysmic Seal and had it erect another barrier around his person.

A dizzying sensation overcame his mind as soon as he put up the barrier, but the +12 additional effect of the Yun’s Soul Ring didn’t

activate in response to the attack. Instead, the +12 ring on his left hand shined briefly to weaken the attack by a bit.

Still, the dizziness was enough to make Bai Yunfei grit his teeth and try his best to stabilize his body!

But while he was trying his best to endure the attack, the bat was already getting very close to him!

“Boom!!” Not a second later, the barrier in front of Bai Yunfei came apart with the bat flying forward without pause!

This time, the barrier had managed to stop the bat’s attack before being shattered apart!

It was an achievement that gave Bai Yunfei no small amount of confidence that he had gotten stronger!

As the thunderwing bat swooped in to attack, Xiao Qi chirped once and flapped its wings. Its wings summoned about three hundred fireballs that surrounded the bat, and while those fireballs moved in to attack it, another three Spatial Edges were thrown into the mix!

Simultaneously, the blue-eyes wyrm roared once before firing off a three-meter wide ball of elemental water!

By now, Bai Yunfei had fully recovered from the mental attack. As the bat was being attacked by the other two soulbeasts, Bai Yunfei moved unflinchingly forward towards the bat in a burst of purple light under his feet!

“Now then....let’s fight for real now!”

Chapter 423: Battling Again! (Fourth)

There was a substantially different level of might in the firepower of Xiao Qi. Whether in the amount of fireballs or the strength of it, they were completely different in scale now that it was almost a mid-stage class six soulbeast in strength. Not only that, the Spatial Edges it attacked with materialized and moved two times as fast as before.

Painful memories of this move sparked fear in the thunderwing bat. Flapping its wings as hard as it could, it dove towards the left to dodge the firestorm, but several of the fireballs had still struck its wings mid-dodge.

But it had at the very least managed to dodge the Spatial Edges.

After a successful dodge, the bat still had the ball of elemental water to worry about. The blue-eyes wyrm was an uncommon, but strong soulbeast with attacks that couldn't be ignored. Recognizing the ball as a threat, the bat's wings started to glow brightly with purple light before cleaving through the ball with its right wing!

‘Boom!’

Once cleaved, the ball was split into two pieces. They fell apart from the middle to allow the thunderwing bat an unimpeded path forwards—only to be faced with a thrust of a fiery spear!

“Skree!”

It was completely flustered by this sudden and unexpected attack from Bai Yunfei. There was barely any time to think with the spear nearly at its eye, so the bat had to completely alter directions and fly to the left.

No sooner did it turn around did yet another crimson-red spear come up to greet it!

And at the same time, the first spear it tried to dodge was now on the verge of spearing through it's right wing!

This was the Doppelganger effect!

When Bai Yunfei advanced forward, he didn't hesitate to use the +12 additional effect of the Fire-tipped Spear!

He knew that the bat had been far too busy trying to catch up with them to even realize that Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi were far different now. Now that the two of them were powered up thanks to the soul contract, they could launch a full-front assault onto the bat!

So it wasn't surprising to see the thunderwing bat fall suddenly into a precarious situation!

With nowhere to go and nothing it could do to evade the next spear thrust, the thunderwing bat folded its wings in on itself!

Somehow, it managed to fold its right wing back just in time to avoid being stabbed, but the real body of Bai Yunfei wasn't aiming for its wing, but its actual flesh!

Contrary to popular opinion, the flesh of a thunderwing bat wasn't all too weak. It was in fact quite strong, especially when considering the bones in the wings. When the bat folded its wings in on itself, Bai Yunfei's spear had landed upon the most hardest bone in its right wing!

“Clink!!!”

A metallic echo resonated in the air when spear met wing. Despite how hard the bones the thunderwing bat had, it was no match for the Fire-tipped Spear with its 2600 attack power.

There was a secondary crack when the spear bore an inch into the bat's wings, and then.....

“Boom!!!!”

The more terrifying attack of the spear had been activated; the explosion effect!

If even the Ninefold Stab wasn't able to activate the explosion

effect this time, it'd mean that the bat's luck would've been far too great. But unfortunately for the bat, it had no such luck this time and so when the explosion occurred, the bat was sent barreling through the skies with a screech of pain!

Like a bullet, the bat was sent flying away from Bai Yunfei with blood sprinkling down from its air trail. Managing somehow to stabilize itself by flapping its wings, the bat came to a stop a good distance away from Bai Yunfei. Its right wing was a mess; a huge hole had been opened up at the upper edge of it, causing about a portion of its wing to the right of the hole to hang uselessly without the bone structure there to keep the wing taut!

The bat had been slow in stabilizing itself due to this wound. Flapping its wings several times in retreat, it was staring at Bai Yunfei now with an expression of shock.

But even after delivering a successful blow onto the bat, Bai Yunfei wasn't one to stop there! Pouncing at the opportunity, Bai Yunfei flew towards the bat like an arrow shot from a bow!

The Flash Step!

No matter how fast the bat was in retreating, Bai Yunfei's explosive advance was much faster! The Flash Steps increased Bai Yunfei's speed by over double what it was before, and with just two steps, it was already caught up to the bat!

Twirling the spear around his waist, Bai Yunfei transferred it to his left hand to stab this time at the bat's chest!

"Skree!!" Again, the bat cried out in panic. Laying itself flat in the air, the bat managed to get away with the spear barely grazing its flesh before it tried to attack Bai Yunfei's chest with two lightning infused claw strikes!

Bai Yunfei anticipated that his move would miss. So when the bat flew above the spear to attack him, he punched at its claws with his right hand!

Eighty-one Fold Fist Force!

“Bang!”

Once more, the thunderwing bat was thrown backwards by the force of the blow. The elemental lightning infused in the claws had been completely dissipated by the blow, and blood was already starting to leak from the bat’s foot.

The claw that had been hit was the one partially decapitated by Xiao Qi’s Spatial Edge, but the remaining part of its claw now had a deep fist print!

When fist met foot, the bat was sent flying away two hundred meters while Bai Yunfei staggered back only a few. The elemental lightning from the bat’s claws rendered Bai Yunfei’s right arm numb, but it was enough to dissuade Bai Yunfei from attacking again afterwards.

This time when the bat stabilized itself, a third emotion could be seen in its eyes aside from fury and hatred—terror!

With how long it had been chasing Bai Yunfei so far, it had been sure that that it’d be able to kill him. Never did it imagine that the one to be heavily injured in their most recent exchange would be itself!

The blow sobered up the bat of its anger-induced fury. It realized that its enemy was no longer heavily injured like it was before the chase. The human was fully healed, and a lot stronger than before!

Unintelligent it may be, but the bat could at least tell that much. It didn’t know how things ended up this way, but the only thing that really mattered was that the person who had so heavily injured it was standing right there in front of it! Indignation began to take root in the bat’s eyes again, and before long, it screeched again in anger. Covering itself in a cloak of purple light, it shot towards Bai Yunfei to attack!

On the other side, Bai Yunfei was rejoicing to himself. His clash

with the bat earlier had told him something very important—

“The bat’s weaker now!”

Two moves was all it took for Bai Yunfei to infer that.

The thunderwing bat was no longer as strong as it was before!

He could guarantee that the damages the thunderwing bat incurred from the Spatial Edge and the Dual Dragon Burst left it more than sufficiently injured. And after chasing him for half an hour, the bat had surely used up plenty of soulforce.

So at best, this thunderwing bat had only the fighting potential of a soulbeast barely at the late-stage class six level!

A smile crept onto his lips at that thought. Now that he was stronger, he no longer feared the thunderwing bat in front of him.

He snorted as the thunderwing bat dove in to attack him. Brandishing his Fire-tipped Spear, he moved forward without fear to attack as well!

“Lucky one day, unlucky the next; since you didn’t let me go earlier, I’ll make sure you die here today instead!”

Chapter 424: The Final Gap, and Victory!

Emboldened by the previous attacks, Bai Yunfei's fighting spirit was burning at its brightest right now. No longer did he even think about escaping; he'd duke it out with the bat right here and now!

He had confidence that he'd win!

This conviction wasn't a baseless one. Perhaps it was because of the strength swelling through his body right now, but Bai Yunfei was sure he'd find out the answer anyways through fighting!

Unflinchingly, Bai Yunfei met the hate-filled strike of the bat with his own in a clash of red and purple light. Bai Yunfei might've lost out to the bat in size, but not in might!

“Bang!!”

The spear of Bai Yunfei slid across the chest of the bat while the claws of the bat scratched against the robes of Bai Yunfei. The claws had been sharp enough to tear the robes apart without a problem and even leave three deep scratch marks onto the Soulsilk Armor Bai Yunfei was wearing underneath it.

The two combatants were now in the opposite places from where they started out. Bai Yunfei's right foot came up, pressing against what seemed to be a wall rather than air, and kicked off against it to come flying back towards the bat!

On the other side, the bat was only just turning around when it realized that a hundred blades of wind was coming down onto its head above it!

This was an attack from Xiao Qi!

In unison, the blue-eyes wyrm unleashed yet another ball of elemental water. This time, rather than sticking together, the ball split apart in hundreds of water bolts to pelt down the bat!

The bat screeched furiously. Its previous plan to turn around to

fight Bai Yunfei was thrown to the side as it instead made a right turn to dodge the blades of wind. It'd deal with the water bolts coming at him first.

The blue-eyes wyrm hadn't an attack that was scarier than Xiao Qi. Folded its wings in front of it, the bat allowed the water bolts to splash across its purple-colored defenses without feeling an ounce of the damage.

The bolts of water bounced harmlessly off of the bat's wings after being repelled by the elemental lightning running through it. And once the barrage was over, the bat dove to its right to dodge another spear strike.

Stepping onto the air, Bai Yunfei disappeared into a blur, but the bat was as fast as he was and circled around him to strike at him.

What carried on after that was series of exchanges between Bai Yunfei and the bat. Xiao Qi tried several times to strike at the bat, but they usually ended up in failure with the bat expertly dodging in between the empty spaces.

The blue-eyes wyrm had resigned itself to become a spectator rather than a fighter during the course of the battle—as an early-stage class six, it was capable of stepping into the air to fight, but its body was ill suited for it and would've only ended badly for it.

The more Bai Yunfei fought, the braver he got. His body was already brimming with wounds again, but he didn't even care. Even without the Wave Treading Steps, Bai Yunfei was able to travel almost explosively here and there to strike at the bat. With how injured its right wing was, it was only a matter of time before the bat was struck again by another explosion, causing it to fly away with a shrill screech of pain.

Bai Yunfei's aura was only at the mid-stage Soul Exalt level, and no matter how many techniques or how fast his soulforce recovery was, his chances of victory against the late-stage class six thunderwing bat was still quite low.

But with Xiao Qi added into the equation, his chances of winning drastically shot upwards so that they now had the upper hand!

Thrice, the thunderwing bat wanted to widen the distance so it could attack Bai Yunfei with a mental attack, but each time was thwarted by Xiao Qi's Spatial Edge. Of all the things in Bai Yunfei's arsenal, the Spatial Edge was what the bat was afraid of most and took extra precaution against anything the bird did.

For ten whole minute, the three combatants fought fiercely from first overhead a large mountain to down below on it. Their attacks had been so fierce that even the mountain itself startled to crumble in several places, and the sparks of light coming from their battle was visible all around.

.....

“Swish! Swish! Swish!”

After intersecting with the bat once again, Bai Yunfei's spear started to glow fiercely with light as its +12 additional effect was activated.

Two separate Bai Yunfei's split apart from the original to move to the left and right of the bat and strike at it from three different angles!

No longer a stranger to such a tactic, the bat flapped its wings to sink down half a meter. It wasn't sure which one was the real body yet, but it could still at least dodge the three spears first before coming to a decision. Its left wing flashed with elemental lightning before forming a bright purple blade to then cut at the leg of the three!

Bai Yunfei narrowed his eyes. The real one leaped up into the air, but the other two were swiftly cut down by the bat!

The bat screeched triumphantly, its right wing glowing this time to focus energy into its claw. By shifting its body, it was able to shift the direction its left wing was cutting at to go upwards at the

still mid-leap Bai Yunfei!

If this were to be true to its aim, then it'd be strong enough to cut Bai Yunfei apart from head to toe, starting with the balls....

“Tsk!”

Realizing the implications of such a horror, Bai Yunfei weighed his options.

It was too late to call the Fire-tipped Spear back from mid-thrust, but his right arm was still free to strike. Arching his back, he swung his right arm down from the left shoulder towards the right, as if trying to backhand the wing!

“Clank!!” There was a muffled clank as the Flameblade Bracer blocked Bai Yunfei's body from the bat's wing!

A painful vibration was sent through Bai Yunfei's arm, but he gritted his teeth in an attempt to endure it. Soulforce started to circulate in his right arm to try and repair the damage done, but the most important thing was that there was a portion of it that started to be absorbed into the bracer itself!

Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up—this was the sensation of the +10 additional effect of the Flameblade Bracer activating!

9% chance to absorb and convert the damage dealt into additional attack power to be released with the next attack.

(Can be held for up to 3 seconds. Amount absorbed cannot exceed the total defensive power of the equipment. Cooldown of 30 seconds.)

Unwilling to give up such a hard to come by opportunity, Bai Yunfei began to will a blade of fire to materialize out from the bracer.

With a pop, a three meter blade of fire extended forth from it!

+12 Additional Effect; the Flame Winged Blade!

Upon the formation of the blade, Bai Yunfei twisted his body for

extra build up before slashing down onto the bat!

With its left wing pushed aside earlier by Bai Yunfei, the bat was left with no other choice but to use its heavily injured right wing to defend itself.

“Bang!!”

When the Flame Winged Blade cut into the right wing of the bat, it unleashed a screech far more miserable than any other screech before. A black scorch mark was starting to appear over the spot where the Flame Winged Blade was touching its wing, and the pungent smell of something being torched was starting to become more prominent to the nose.

But Bai Yunfei’s attack wasn’t over just yet!

The Flame Winged Blade petered away from the bat’s wing, unable to fully cut into it, but Bai Yunfei sunk his body so that he was at the same level of height as with the bat. His right fist clenched tightly on itself as he prepared the Ardent Sun Glove, and before the power in the bracer was wasted, he unleashed a mighty punch onto the bat’s chest!

Eighty-one Fold Fist Force!

“Bang!!!!”

There was a heavy pounding sound as the fist slammed into the beast’s stomach, and then with a frightening wail, the bat was sent spiralling away!

Chapter 425: Another Power Up?

By capitalizing on the most optimal time to strike, Bai Yunfei managed to use the absorbed power in the Flameblade Bracer to power up his Eighty-one Fold Fist Force to strike down the bat when its defenses was down!

“Xiao Qi!”

At his command, Xiao Qi flapped its wings, unleashing a storm of wind blades onto the bat!

This time, the bat was unable to move in time and was surrounded by it all!

In a last-ditch effort to protect itself, the bat tried to lash out with a elemental lightning infused strike, but it wasn't able to do a thing. Several blades of wind smashed into its body unceremoniously, and without any elemental lightning to protect itself, the bat was unable to stop the blades of wind from carving out bloody wounds into it.

Then when a blade of wind smashed into it from behind, its body suddenly came to a stop. Screeching in surprise, its body went ablaze in purple light before shooting off rays of purple lightning everywhere!

This....this was the confusion status!

Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up upon realizing that the bat was struck by the confusion effect. Just as he was wondering if he should try to use the Dual Dragon Burst to try and kill the bat, a happy trill came from above his head!

Upon its trill, Xiao Qi's body started to churn with soulforce as it prepared to strike. In front of Xiao Qi, three Spatial Edges formed from the air in a triangular position and moved silently to strike at the still confused bat!

And in the next second, the shrill cries of the bat came to

a....stop!

While somehow dodging one of the Spatial Edges in its confused state, it was unable to dodge the remaining two. One cut apart at its left wing, stopping briefly when met with the layer of elemental lightning and then moving onwards through it, leaving an empty space between the left wing of the bat and its main body!

But the last Spatial Edge went through the bat's chest! Like the one before it, the third Spatial Edge paused briefly when it met with resistance before cutting into its right shoulder and leaving a gap where it touched!

It froze in place for a moment before its bisected body fell down to the forest below in a rain of blood and guts!

“Boom!!”

There was an explosion as the remaining elemental lightning running around the bat's body pieces scattered into the air. The severed left wing had blown up from the elemental lightning running through it.

No light was to be seen in the bat's eyes, and not even a screech could be heard from the bat.

It was already dead!

Bai Yunfei watched the bat drop from the skies in surprise. His hands were frozen mid seal—he hadn't expected the bat to be killed so easily. Before he could even use the Dual Dragon Burst, Xiao Qi had landed the finishing blow with three Spatial Edges!

“Chirp~!”

A loud and clear chirp came forth from Xiao Qi's beak. Then in a flash of light, it dove into the forest after the bat's body.

It was after the bat's soulgem.

“Phew....” Bai Yunfei heaved a heavy sigh in relief. As he headed down to where the blue-eyes wyrm was, Bai Yunfei slapped his

palm to his chest, canceling the 'coil' form and dislodging the second fireseed from his chest.

He nearly stumbled down from the skies now that the battle was over. It had been a very tough battle, and the 'coil' form had left his body aching all over. His soulforce was practically zero despite being refilled when he powered up, and the elemental lightning left by the bat had still a residual effect on his body.

Furthermore, there were two heavy wounds on his left thigh that were still bleeding profusely. And on his chest, there was one more wound that he hadn't the time to start healing yet.

Gritting his teeth, Bai Yunfei sat down and went into a meditative stance to try and heal up.

By using the Yun's Soul Ring to recover his soulforce, Bai Yunfei was able to keep a consistent supply of soulforce to his wounds. In time, his body started to heal up quite nicely, and with the recovery effect of his armor, Bai Yunfei only needed several minutes to fully remove the elemental lightning in his body. The wounds had stopped bleeding by now, and the skin could even be seen knitting together at a steady rate.

Soon enough, three quarters of the wounds were fully healed and the rest of the wounds were for the most part stabilized. The aching pain wasn't as bad now, and Bai Yunfei could finally relax to a certain degree.

Then, something caught his attention, prompting him to open his eyes and look straight ahead of him.

"This is..."

Just ten meters away from him, four different rays of light were shining brilliantly, but the purple ray of light was the most prominent—practically overshadowing the other three rays of light. A great deal of elemental lightning was starting to take form before being absorbed into the ball of light in the middle of it all.

Within this light, the soulforce of an early-stage class six soulbeast could be felt, but some reason, it was getting stronger and stronger with each passing second....

Needless to say, the being inside this ball of light was Xiao Qi! After obtaining the soulgem of the bird, it ingested it into its body straight away!

Every soulbeast knew instinctively that ingesting the soulgem of another would boost its power. It was a rule that every soulbeast knew and followed, so the blue-eyes wyrm looked on with extreme jealousy when Xiao Qi devoured the soulgem!

But no matter how jealous it was, it didn't dare try to steal it.

Aside from its strength being increased when it ate the soulgem, there was very clearly another type of energy wrapping around its body to further strengthen it, but only Bai Yunfei could distinctly tell apart this energy from the others.

A curious gleam of light entered Bai Yunfei's eyes, "Is Xiao Qi advancing in level again?"

It was only a thought, but how ridiculous that thought was! Xiao Qi had only just advanced to the early-stage class six level, how could it advance so quickly to the mid-stage class six level, even if it killed a peak late-stage class six soulbeast?

But it really did seem that this was the case....and that left Bai Yunfei practically giddy with excitement.

He knew that the soulgem of the bat wasn't nearly enough to make such a huge change like this, the mysterious +14 additional effect must've done something!

Bai Yunfei had been lucky enough to have some time in the last few days to think about the +14 additional effect. He had inferred that it had to do something with being a 'gain additional attack with each person killed', since he had once an equipment that did the same thing.

Each time he killed someone or something with that piece of equipment, its strength would increase by 3% for a total of ten minutes.

But this effect was limited by time, and it was an effect on a rather low leveled item. Seemingly useless, Bai Yunfei blew it up in an attempt to further upgrade it.

But if the +14 additional effect of the egg had an effect along the lines of that, this meant that....the effects were permanent!

It wasn't a stretch to say that either. He had never seen a +14 additional effect before, so having it be limited by an effect would've been too much of a downer to be true. And since it was inherited by Xiao Qi's body, it was more accurate to call these 'skills', meaning it was turned into something that could help make Xiao Qi even stronger!

He didn't know the concrete details, but the facts were there. Each time Xiao Qi killed an enemy, it grew distinctly stronger!

On this fact alone, Xiao Qi was practically the most unique soulbeast in the world!

So stunned was Bai Yunfei that he forgot about healing the rest of his wounds to stare unwaveringly at Xiao Qi.

Feeling as Xiao Qi's soulforce continued to increase in strength, an expectant smile started to grow on Bai Yunfei's face.

“Are you going to become a....mid-stage class six soulbeast, Xiao Qi?”

Chapter 426: Safe Zone

In midair, Xiao Qi's wings were wrapped around itself as it floated in the thick flow of elemental energy. Seemingly asleep, it was left undisturbed by the elemental fire, wood, wind, and lightning as they flowed into its body. The elemental lightning had been the most noticeable energy that was strengthening Xiao Qi's body the most.

Everything else in the world was at peace with only the occasional wind running through the trees to produce a rustling sound as Xiao Qi underwent this ordeal.

Bai Yunfei was still looking at the glows of light expectantly. Each light that formed away from Xiao Qi was looked at by Bai Yunfei, and then looked at again when it flowed into Xiao Qi.

With each stream of light that entered Xiao Qi's body, its aura begun to grow in intensity. It was a slow increase, but consistent for ten whole minutes, and soon enough, it was looking as if Xiao Qi would become a mid-stage class six soulbeast.

But to actually become a mid-stage class six soulbeast was a different matter than being close to being one. At the rate Xiao Qi was going at, it'd still take a very long time to actually become a mid-stage class six.

And if Bai Yunfei's guess was correct, the rate Xiao Qi's aura was strengthening at was already starting to slow.

Another ten minutes went by before Xiao Qi's aura suddenly came to a stop. And then in the next second, it surged drastically as if undergoing its final spurt of energy to absorb all of the rest of the elemental energy in the area into Xiao Qi's body.

“Chirp!!!!”

A loud and clear cry was heard by Xiao Qi. Flapping open its wings, Xiao Qi emitted a dazzling glow of light from its body,

looking more like a supernatural bird from mythlore rather than a prisma oriole.

Gently flapping its wings in what seemed to be a stretching exercise of its body, Xiao Qi turned to look happily at Bai Yunfei before flying over to him.

On its way to him, Xiao Qi's body downsized to the size of a sparrow to rest upon his right shoulder. Now perched on his shoulder, Xiao Qi rubbed its head affectionately against Bai Yunfei's cheek, chirping contently as it shared a happy feeling with him.

"Haha, I'm fine now, don't you worry. I'll be fully recovered soon enough." Bai Yunfei reassured it with a chuckle, though there was a small sliver of regret in his eyes.

Much to Bai Yunfei's disappointment, Xiao Qi hadn't managed to become a mid-stage class six soulbeast, even with that last spurt of energy it unleashed at the end.

In the end, it was only stuck halfway in between an early-stage and mid-stage class six.

"Ah...I was too greedy!" He thought to himself, "To improve this much so quickly was already supposed to be impossible, I shouldn't have put my expectations up too high....Xiao Qi's already unique beyond everything else, him reaching the class six level should've been impossible as well. If it was that easy to become a mid-stage class six, I should be worried if anything."

A class six was the same level as the Soul Exalt title in the world of soul cultivators. So to jump so quickly in levels would've been absolutely absurd. The path onward wouldn't be as easy as it was before either. Each bottleneck that would come next would have to be treated meticulously, else one risk being unable to control their power and have something bad happen.

Bai Yunfei took some relief in knowing that and tried his best to

focus on his own recovery efforts.

Time went on slowly for Bai Yunfei as a ring of red light enveloped his body and healed up the rest of his wounds. The last vestiges of pain was now gone from his body, and the sun was already starting to set from the west at the same time as Bai Yunfei opened his eyes.

Standing up from his spot, Bai Yunfei stretched his body, sighing contentedly whenever there was a popping sound from his joints.

He looked up to the setting sky, and then all around him suspiciously.

“This place is a little strange....” he remarked, “there’s not a single soulbeast around for at least ten kilometers around....that’s really strange....”

Now that he was a Soul Exalt, his soulsense was now a lot stronger as well, meaning he was able to sense things from farther away. And upon his search, Bai Yunfei was surprised to see that not even a single soulbeast was to be had within ten kilometers of this place! He didn’t look any farther than ten kilometers, but Bai Yunfei had the feeling that even if he doubled his search radius, he’d still come up with nothing.

While he realized this fact during his battle with the thunderwing bat before, Bai Yunfei didn’t really understand the implications of the matter until afterwards. At the time, he was relieved that it meant he could fight the bat without worry of being interrupted—they were after all in the dangerous class six area of the Soulbeast Forest, so if another late-stage class six soulbeast came out, then things would’ve gone very badly for Bai Yunfei,

But now that the threat that was the bat was gone, and his wounds were fully healed, Bai Yunfei was left with all the time in the world to fully understand the situation he was in.

“Where....where am I in the class six area?” Bai Yunfei thought.

He had been lead to this place by Xiao Qi when they were running away earlier, and with so many detours to try and shake off the bat, Bai Yunfei didn’t even know where they were anymore.

Before, they had been in the middle of the class six area, but the chances of them still being there was very low.

So this left him with two options.....

Was he in the earlier half of the class six area, or the later half?

If there had been any soulbeasts here, Bai Yunfei would’ve guessed that he was at the end of the class six area. But since not even a single soulbeast was to be found here, Bai Yunfei was absolutely at a loss.

“I’ve never heard of this before. Was there even such a place in the class six area?! How could such a large piece of land like this not have a single soulbeast....? Is this the territory of a super strong soulbeast that drove away all other soulbeasts? Did I manage to come at a time the soulbeast isn’t here?”

The more Bai Yunfei thought about it, the less he understood. For the first time since Bai Yunfei stepped foot into this place, it was starting to feel more like a regular forest than the infamous Soulbeast Forest.

“It’s a little strange, but there doesn’t seem to be any danger here...” Bai Yunfei continued to think to himself.

“If that’s the case, then that’s good. I should rest here for now, and then scout out the area tomorrow morning.”

Since it was dark, Bai Yunfei wasn’t in a rush to leave any time soon. Coming across the thunderberry and fighting the thunderwing bat was definitely the most dangerous thing Bai Yunfei experienced so far in the forest, so he wanted to make sure he was back at full fighting strength before he continued on.

His eyes lit up when the thunderberry came to mind. Shaking his right hand, the object materialized into the world, revealing itself to be a fist-sized strawberry in his hands.

At first, Bai Yunfei was going to have Xiao Qi eat this to try and break through the bottleneck. But since he and Xiao Qi formed a soul contract with one another and broke the bottleneck that way, it was pointless to eat the thunderberry right now.

Noticing that Xiao Qi was staring at the berry in excitement, Bai Yunfei laughed, “Let’s save it for now. You need to familiarize yourself with your strength. When you’re about to become a mid-stage class six, you can eat the thunderberry then.”

He put away the thunderberry and stood up again to look at the hundred meter crater they were in. Just two steps after deciding to set up a fire near the base of the mountain, Bai Yunfei came to a stop again, “Almost forgot to change into a new set of clothes.” he muttered to himself as he realized just how sorry of a state his clothes were in.

They were a complete mess after going through such a rough battle. There was blood everywhere—especially around his left thigh where his biggest wound was—and many parts of his robes were scratched apart due to the bat’s claws.

It was very noticeable to him when he took those two steps though, as blood drops sprinkled the ground when he walked.

Since no one was around, Bai Yunfei decided to simply strip himself of his clothing and wipe the last of the blood off his body before changing into a new pair of robes and pants.

But just as he was fitted one leg through his trousers and was preparing to put on the other side....

“Oh? This prisma oriole is of the class six level?”

The sound of a lady suddenly made itself known to Bai Yunfei, snapping himself out of shock so badly that he missed the opening

of his trouser with his legs and tumbled to the ground!

Chapter 427: The Two Winged Kings

Bai Yunfei had been so startled by the sudden voice that he tripped over his trousers, tumbling to the ground and ending up with a mouthful of grass. Having not fit his second leg into the trouser hole, the trousers fell over on top of him as he sprawled onto the ground.

He leapt back up, halfway mortified and halfway wary at this new arrival. Putting on his trousers and tying his belt in one swift motion, Bai Yunfei retreated several steps away with his soulforce already raring to go at a moment's notice.

The moment he turned around to look at the one who spoke, Bai Yunfei's pupils dilated in shock.

“Soul—Soul Kings!”

His heart seized with shock. Up in the skies above him were two individuals standing solemnly as they looked down at him.

There wasn't just one Soul King, but two! Their aura wasn't radiating with the might of one, but the fact that they were standing above him without needing to be in constant motion proved them to be Soul Kings!

There was one male and one female; both around the age of thirty.

The male wore a robe of purple with sleeves that billowed in the air. His eyebrows were sharp like swords, his eyes bright like stars, and his expression handsome, but soldierly.

The female on the other hand, wore robes a bluish-green and flowed gently with the wind. Her eyebrows were curved like a willow branch, her eyes clear, her lips cherry-red, and her beauty as capable of the downfall of a city.

Both male and female smiled as they watched Bai Yunfei stumble over his words.

“Haha, don’t be afraid, little brother. We bear you no harm.” The female spoke first.

Her words were soothing to the ears, and Bai Yunfei felt himself believing her. Even if she was lying, there was nothing Bai Yunfei could do anyways against two Soul Kings.

“Seniors....what might this junior do for you?” Bai Yunfei bowed courteously.

The female tilted her head to point a jade-like finger at Xiao Qi. “We are here for him.”

“Xiao Qi?” Bai Yunfei repeated. He looked down at Xiao Qi, who in turn was looking at the two figures in the air with a mysterious expression.

“Xiao Qi? Is that his name?” She smiled. “A prisma oriole that managed to become a class six, how surprising. Do tell, how did he manage to achieve that?”

“I....” Not knowing just what the two wanted with Xiao Qi, Bai Yunfei was hesitant to answer to them. But then, Xiao Qi rubbed its head to Bai Yunfei before chirping several times to him.

“Eh?”

Xiao Qi was communicating something only Bai Yunfei understood, and its words had clearly been surprising to hear. Pausing to digest what Xiao Qi said to him, Bai Yunfei turned back to the two figures with more understanding of the situation than before.

“This junior is Bai Yunfei, disciple of Zi Jin from the Crafting School. My deepest respect for the ones known as the ‘Two Winged Kings’.” Bai Yunfei bowed once more.

“Oh? So you recognize us two?” This time, the male was the one to speak. “Did he tell you that?” He nodded at Xiao Qi, “Communication like that means....you two formed a soul contract?!”

“Indeed, senior. Xiao Qi and I have formed a soul contract with each other,” Bai Yunfei nodded, “because of that, Xiao Qi was able to become a class six after it.”

Now that he knew who these two individuals were, Bai Yunfei was a lot more calm in knowing that these two people wouldn't hurt him.

Xiao Qi had told him that these two ‘people’ were actually like him! While not prisma orioles, they too, were soulbeasts—and of the bird species to boot!

Bai Yunfei didn't understand at first, but with Xiao Qi's warning and some information told to him by Zi Jin once before, Bai Yunfei finally confirmed it for himself!

.....

In the world of soulbeasts, there was a rare type of soulbeasts known as the Jian, or the ‘one-winged birds’. These soulbeasts are naturally born with the level of a class four soulbeast, but what was most special about them was their lives itself.

The Jian were by no means twins. But in the rare flock of Jian, every single newborn one would have a second half born at the same time. The mother and father would pair the eggs together, and when the eggs hatch, they would be forever destined to live with one another until their death.

With this interdependency on each other, the two Jian become capable of a level of growth far beyond most soulbeasts. Their trainings would result in double the results for half the work, and when they fought together, their strength would get even stronger.

Author note: In Chinese mythlore, the Jian were known to be birds with one-eye and one wing, meaning they'd need their other half in order to fly and such. The Jian in this story will have its differences and is basically just borrowing the name, please don't

pay too much attention to it.

In the world right now, there were two Jians known as the strongest of them all as being both at the mid-stage class seven level. Together, their strength could be said to be a late-stage class seven soulbeast.

They were the patron saints of all bird type soulbeasts and two of the Eight Soulbeast Rulers!

And yet, here they stood right in front of Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi!

Soulbeasts at the class seven level were already equivalent to the Soul Emperors of the soul cultivator world. As long as they reach this level, even the most savage and primal soulbeast would achieve the rationality of an intelligent being and be able to shapeshift into the form of a human.

The male was known as Yi Gang, and the female known as Yi Rou. In the world of soul cultivators, they were known as the ‘Two Winged Kings’.

.....

The one known as Yi Gang was surprised to hear that not only did a prisma oriole form a soul contract with a young human, but an extremely talented one at that.

“You say you’re the disciple of Zi Jin from the Crafting School?” He queried, suspicious of his words, “According to what I know, Zi Jin has only three disciples, and the youngest one is thirty of age at the very least.”

But Bai Yunfei was calm. “This junior was only accepted as a disciple a few years ago, so the news of my being hasn’t yet been made widespread. My master told me that he once came across a pair of seniors when he traveled into the Soulbeast Forest, and made a soul armament for senior Yi Gang.”

“Oh? Then you must really be his fourth disciple?” Yi Gang’s eyebrow perked into the air. What Bai Yunfei said was a

confirmation of his identity, since not many soul cultivators knew about them or what they had due to their habit of staying inside the forest.

“Haha, I hadn’t the foggiest that you were really the disciple of Zi Jin, little brother. It must be fate for us to meet today.” Yi Rou spoke, “Bai Yunfei, was it? Do tell me, how did you meet this prisma oriole? Was it in the Soulbeast Forest? Why did you decide to make a soul contract? Was there some sort of fate that brought you two together?”

Bai Yunfei didn’t know what to say here. There was no way he could tell them that he and Xiao Qi only just met two months ago. No matter how nicely Yi Rou looked at and spoke to him, Bai Yunfei couldn’t say it.

But at the same time, he was talking with the two most friendly soulbeasts of the Eight Soulbeast Rulers, and he was afraid of angering them.

Seeing that he wasn’t responding, Yi Gang narrowed his eyes, but Yi Rou didn’t seem to mind.

Smiling, she beckoned to Xiao Qi, “Come here, young one. I have something to ask you.”

Chapter 428: The Fate of Xiao Qi

“Chirp??”

A hesitant chirp escaped from Xiao Qi's beak. Yi Rou's words were like an unrefusable order to it, making Xiao Qi want to fly on over to obey, but it hesitated to do so thanks to its bond with Bai Yunfei.

“Their bond has already deepened to such a degree like this? How curious, what kind of history do these two younglings have?”

Xiao Qi's hesitance to come over was noted by Yi Rou. It was surprising to say the least, as her strength as a mid-stage class seven soulbeast allowed her an aura that exerted her will over other soulbeasts without her even needing to do so consciously. Very few soulbeasts would deny an order from her, but here Xiao Qi stood, doing exactly that.

Noting Xiao Qi's hesitance, Bai Yunfei nodded his head. “Go on, they're your seniors after all.”

He wasn't wrong in his judgement. The Two Winged Kings really did had the purest of intentions for Xiao Qi. Zi Jin had once said before that they were essentially the guardians of the bird species. As long as any one of them weren't malicious in being, they'd always find asylum under the protection of the Two Winged Kings.

And the fact that they were looking at Xiao Qi with the purest of intentions was enough to show that they were merely caring for a youngling and wanted to make sure it was alright.

Now having Bai Yunfei's approval, Xiao Qi saw no reason more to refuse Yi Rou's calling. At once, it flew towards her direction and landed on top of one of her fingers. Chirping twice, Xiao Qi spoke politely out in greeting towards the two.

“Haha, has your intelligence already grown so quickly? What a precocious child....”

Laughing as she watched Xiao Qi on her finger, Yi Rou began to speak in what seemed to be a series of warbles and chirps—she was communicating with Xiao Qi in the common tongue of the birds.

Bai Yunfei narrowed his eyes. Yi Rou was speaking this way so as to avoid having Bai Yunfei have Xiao Qi refuse to answer while also allowing them to ask the question unimpeded.

But....

They severely underestimated the bond between Xiao Qi and him if they thought thus. As long as Xiao Qi didn't refuse, he'd be understand what Xiao Qi was thinking about at any given time.

Without any other emotion showing on his face, Bai Yunfei communicated mentally with Xiao Qi, hinting that there were secrets he didn't want to say.

So with a cocked head, Xiao Qi would chirp and answer Yi Rou's questions, but it'd turn to Bai Yunfei every so often before doing so. Having noticed it, Yi Rou felt deeply surprised, feeling that there was more to Bai Yunfei than what was shown on the surface.

The surprise and affection she felt for Xiao Qi grew with each question she asked and had answered. Xiao Qi had broken the 'common knowledge' of what was to be expected from prisma orioles by becoming a class six soulbeast. By the very end of her question asking session, Yi Rou couldn't even hide the excitement from her face anymore.

To be able to shatter the common expectations of a soulbeast required both extreme luck and all the talent the heavens could possibly grant in order to become what was known as 'variants'.

Variants were the type of soulbeasts that would have a plethora of achievements and weren't uncommon in the world of soulbeasts.

There were of course more than eight soulbeasts who had reached the class seven level, rather than having only just the

‘Eight Soulbeast Rulers’. They only represented the strongest or the most unique soulbeasts, and amongst the eight of them, the amount of ‘variants’ made up more than half of their numbers. The success those variants enjoyed far outstripped the success of others, and despite them being rather ordinary in the scope of their entire species, they were still rarer than others due to being variants.

“What an unfortunate child....” Upon learning Xiao Qi was an ‘orphan’, the affection she felt for Xiao Qi grew even more.

“Do you wish to travel with us? We can bring you to the innermost parts of the Soulbeast Forest and impart onto you our special methods of training. It should help you most wonderfully as a variant species of the prisma orioles. I might not be able to tell your age, but you surely can’t be of a hundred years of age. Even those of the class seven level rarely have talent like that. As long as you travel with us, we can assure you that you’ll become even stronger....”

The question imposed onto Xiao Qi caused Bai Yunfei’s eyes to dilate. Thanks to his bond with Xiao Qi, Bai Yunfei was able to listen in on the conversation, but the question asked now made his heart pound rapidly.

The soul contract with Xiao Qi was a yoke of sorts, but it was by no means a physical one. Xiao Qi could freely choose where it wanted to go. In fact, there were plenty of strong soulbeasts that chose to stay in the Soulbeast Forest to train, and only left when summoned; the primary example being those soulbeasts who were of the class seven level.

Bai Yunfei was reluctant to part with Xiao Qi—since they had only just formed a soul contract with one another—but he wouldn’t stop it from leaving if it wanted to.

“Chirp!”

While Bai Yunfei was worrying about how Xiao Qi would

respond, the bird immediately chirped a response straight away.

In that response, Bai Yunfei could only feel one tone behind it—refusal!

Refusal without delay!

In fact, Xiao Qi was looking quite annoyed by Yi Rou's suggestion.

“Eh?”

Both Yi Rou and Yi Gang didn't expect to be refused. Being looked after by two of the Eight Soulbeast Rulers wasn't inferior to being with a young soul cultivator whose master was Zi Jin; even the most primal of soulbeasts wouldn't give up the opportunity to be taught by them....

And yet Xiao Qi did so without even thinking about it!

Like Yi Rou and Yi Gang, Bai Yunfei was surprised, but he smiled when he heard it.

Xiao Qi chirped twice before preparing to fly back to Bai Yunfei. Before it could fly away, however, an invisible power prevented the bird from moving, even its wings were left unable to flap.

“An adamant youngling, this one is.” Yi Gang eyed Xiao Qi, a look of admiration appearing in his eye. Only a rare few soulbeasts would dare treat the two of them like Xiao Qi did.

“Haha, there's no need for such emotions, young one. If you're unwilling to be apart from your contractee, then we won't force the issue.” Yi Rou stroked Xiao Qi's feathers. “But us meeting here in the forest today is a meeting of fate. Allow me to offer you a present....”

A jade like finger pressed onto Xiao Qi's forehead as Yi Rou closed her eyes. Concentrating, her soulforce began to circulate in on herself.

Bai Yunfei grew surprised; from the information he was gleaming

from Xiao Qi's mind, he could sense....this was the information of some sort of training method!

Up until they reach the class seven level, soulbeast relied primarily on their own ability to absorb the elements of the world to grow stronger. After reaching the class seven level, their intelligence would become capable enough to understand even better and faster methods of training. And the one Yi Rou was giving Xiao Qi was a training method unique to birds!

“Wha—” Taken back from the information he was receiving, Bai Yunfei could hardly contain his immense joy afterwards.

This was no 'present'! It was an immense blessing of fortuity!

Chapter 429: Wind and Lightning Feathers

Imparting training methods was but of no difficulty to someone like Yi Rou. With Xiao Qi not resisting the imparting of the technique, it only took a short three minutes before Yi Rou pulled her hand away and opened her eyes. Whilst Xiao Qi was processing the information, Yi Rou was looking at it with flashing eyes, “However much you learn will be dependent on yourself. If you can learn it all, we of the avians shall have yet another strong one to our ranks....”

It took a while before Xiao Qi was back to full awareness. Chirping twice to Yi Rou, it then rubbed its head to her hand in a sign of thanks for being granted such a boon.

“Haha, your road is a long one. I hope that you’ll be able to maintain that sincerity of yours and remain uncorrupted by the world.” Yi Rou stroked its feathers. Her eyes were flashing with a faraway light, as though she was thinking of something, before she followed up with, “Since I’ve given you a training method, I’ll give you another present...”

Her wrist shook slightly, bringing out a pair of feathers that shone violet and green when it appeared, meaning that they were made of energy rather than being material. They were transparent in light, but each individual feather could be seen faintly outlined.

Yi Gang’s eyes widened as the item was taken out. Giving her a questioning look, he looked as though he wanted to say something, but decided against it.

Like Yi Gang, Bai Yunfei’s eyes were wide open as well when he saw the feathers. “These are....low heaven tier soul armaments!”

The aura radiating from the feathers was weak, but the quality of a soul armament was all too noticeable for a crafter like Bai Yunfei- there was no hiding a heaven tier soul armament!

The hand holding onto the pair of feathers unattached itself from it to let it float in the air. Whilst it floated there in front of Xiao Qi, Yi Rou pointed her index finger onto Xiao Qi's head. A droplet of greenish-glowing blood was then extracted from Xiao Qi's head!

As soon as the droplet of blood was taken out, a pained chirp came from Xiao Qi, shuddering from the loss of half of its soulforce!

Yi Rou drew her finger back, letting the blood swell in size as her own blood mixed with it. Letting the two droplets of blood seep and mix with each other, she pointed the finger to where the feathers were still floating and had the blood be sucked into the two feathers.

“Bzzz.....”

The feathers started to hum as soon as the blood was absorbed into them, green and violet light blinking furiously as elemental wind and lightning started to ebb and flow into the area. Waving her hand, Yi Rou had the pair of feathers float over to Xiao Qi--the feathers changing in size as they matched the size of Xiao Qi's own wing feathers!

And in the next moment, the soul armaments fastened onto Xiao Qi's wings as if fitted exactly for it!

By the time the light disappeared from Xiao Qi's wings, the feathers that were fitted onto them disappeared as well!

“Its name is the Wind and Lightning Feathers, a soul armament crafted from our fallen feathers when we became class sevens. Even with its meager abilities, I'm sure it'll suit you well in your future....” She petted Xiao Qi's head with a smile, “Now, return to your contractee. Be sure to train hard so as to not disappoint us....”

“Chirp chirp....” Rubbing its head against her palm, Xiao Qi chirped coyishly like a child. There was a feeling of attachment to the female, making it reluctant to leave, but it flew back to Bai

Yunfei's side in the end.

There was nothing strange about how Xiao Qi was flying about now, making Bai Yunfei curious about the feathers given to it. If a heaven tier soul armament could be made indistinguishable when worn, it meant that there was a secret behind it.

Once Xiao Qi returned to its normal perch on Bai Yunfei's shoulder, Bai Yunfei bowed once more to the two class sevens in front of him, "Thank you for bestowing your blessings and guidance upon Xiao Qi."

Yi Rou gave Bai Yunfei a long calculative look, "I know not why you are here in the deepest parts of the class six area, but there is danger here. You'd do well to leave this place at once, and be sure to look after yourselves..."

Nodding to Yi Gang, she and her other counterpart stepped away and out of sight in the blink of an eye.

In a matter of moments, it was almost as if the two had never been there in the first place, with Bai Yunfei being unable to detect either of the two.

Now free to relax, Bai Yunfei let out the breath of air he had been holding. "So we were in the deepest parts of the class six area!!"

Now that he knew where he was, Bai Yunfei was determined to leave the area first thing tomorrow morning. 'Catching' the stare Xiao Qi was giving him, Bai Yunfei smiled, "You're a very lucky one today, Xiao Qi! A training method and a soul armament! Your seniors treat you really well!"

"Chirp chirp~!" Flapping its wings in agreement, Xiao Qi chirped excitedly.

"Haha, let me see your soul armament, I want to see how good it is." He chuckled, petting the bird somewhat impatiently.

Xiao Qi nodded, allowing the wings it was given to appear with a pulse of soulforce. In a burst of violet and green, the two feathers

appeared in Xiao Qi’s wings with elemental wind and lightning emanating from the feathers. With a thought, Xiao Qi had the nearly-transparent feathers detach and float over to Bai Yunfei’s hands.

“Eh? This feeling is....” As soon as the feathers appeared again for him to see, Bai Yunfei felt something familiar to them, “Are these....soulbound armaments?!”

It was a miraculous feeling that wasn’t felt by Bai Yunfei personally, but through Xiao Qi and the connection they shared. This was what a soulbound armament felt like!

In other words, the Wind and Lightning Feathers were a soulbound armament of Xiao Qi!

“It....it can be done this way?!” He was stunned. The actions that led up to Yi Rou giving the Wind and Lightning Feathers to Xiao Qi had been incomprehensible to Bai Yunfei prior to this. But now, it was clear to him that what Yi Rou did was bind the Wind and Lightning Feathers to Xiao Qi!

“Damn! They really are class sevens if they can do something like that.” Bai Yunfei remarked as he touched the Wind and Lightning Feathers.

Equipment Grade: Low Heaven
Elemental Affinity: Wind, Lightning
Attack: 2160
Defense: 2270

Equipment Effect 1: 10% increase in wind and lightning based attacks.
Equipment Effect 2: 50% increase in flight speed.

Upgrade Requirement: 160 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei blinked.

“Has two elements, attack and defense, and two equipment

effects!!”

Contrary to his expectations, the stats of the Wind and Lightning Feathers were far stronger than he thought!

Despite being just barely within the parameters in being considered as a low-heaven tier soul armament, the stats of the Wind and Lightning Feathers were still as precious as his own Ardent Sun Glove!

“They gave such a precious treasure as a greeting present to Xiao Qi.....can they form soul armaments when they become a class seven soulbeast then? No wonder these feathers are so special....” Bai Yunfei remarked to himself as he inspected the feathers with increasing glee.

“Then....if I upgrade it, what kind of effects will it have next?”

Chapter 430: Is Something the Matter?

Upgrade Successful
Equipment Grade: Low Heaven Elemental Affinity: Wind, Lightning Upgrade Level: +10 Attack: 2160 Defense: 2270 Additional Attack: 1000 Additional Defense: 1100 Equipment Effect 1: 10% increase in wind and lightning based attacks. Equipment Effect 2: 50% increase in flight speed. +10 Additional Effect: 100% increase in equipment effects. Upgrade Requirement: 160 Soulpoints

There were a few hit and misses in the attempt to upgrade it to +10, but other than that, Bai Yunfei didn't really find it challenging to do so.

A small smile crawled onto Bai Yunfei's face as he basked in the stronger amounts of elemental wind and lightning coming from the feathers.

In no time at all, the attack and defense of the feathers had increased by an entire half, making it into a mid-heaven tier soul armament!

Whenever he had a piece of equipment that had a tremendous increase in strength like this, Bai Yunfei always felt amazed.

"100% increase in the equipment effects....that's a new one!" His eyes lit up excitedly. "It's a new type of effect, one that increases the effects of equipment effects, then? If it doubles the equipment effects, that means....the first equipment effect goes from 10% to 20%, and the second equipment effect goes from 50% to 100%?"

That sounds about right....”

A feeling of satisfaction swelled inside of him as he thought about the additional effect of the feathers, “The attack and defense went up by a half, and the speed doubled. This soulbound armament couldn’t....couldn’t possibly fit Xiao Qi anymore than if it tried.”

“Haha, you got a decent soul armament there. You’ll be a lot stronger with that now, Xiao Qi.” Bai Yunfei chuckled, returning the armament to the bird who then had the feathers fit itself back into its wings and out of sight.

As soon as the feathers were reintegrated into its wings, Xiao Qi noted the change overcome it with a look of surprise. Tilting its head, the bird gave Bai Yunfei an inquisitive look.

“Haha, how’s it? Impressive, right? This is my special power!” Bai Yunfei hadn’t a reason to hide the Upgrade Technique since it was Xiao Qi.

“Chirp??”

It didn’t know what the Upgrade Technique was, but it didn’t take much to know that it was something Bai Yunfei used to upgrade his current weapons and armory. Knowing that, Xiao Qi didn’t really need to concern itself with it.

So it chirped twice in thanks instead.

The sun was already starting to set, and the skies darkening with each passing moment. Having not yet eaten dinner, Bai Yunfei pulled out some rations from his ring and started the process to prepare it.

“Come on out, Xiao Lan. Now that they’re gone, why are you hiding? With how cowardly you are, you’re disgracing the ‘wyrms’!” Bai Yunfei laughed, throwing another piece of lumber into the fire. Arranging a skewer of meat, Bai Yunfei allowed for the fire to start cooking it while he sat on a nearby stone to rest.

“Rrrr.....”

From not too far away, the hesitant growling of the blue-eyes wyrm was heard as it came out. Miniature in size still, the wyrm had been completely intimidated by the appearance of the Two Winged Kings and tried its best to hide all evidence of its presence when they were there.

It had a wronged expression on its face as if to say—"They were class seven soulbeasts, class seven! They'd kill and eat my soulgem on a whim if they wanted to, how could I not be scared?"

"Look at you, you're acting nothing like a rare soulbeast should."

Again, Bai Yunfei just had to laugh. The more he interacted with the blue-eyes wyrm, the more it felt like the wyrm was starting to gain even more human emotions and thinking.

.....

While Bai Yunfei attended to his meal preparations, a glow of violet and green light was traveling through the air thousands of kilometers away.

It was Yi Rou and Yi Gang.

Yi Rou had a fatigued expression on her face, prompting Yi Gang to ask, "Rou'er, giving that training method would've sufficed for a slightly more extraordinary prisma oriole like that child, why hand over the Wind and Lightning Feathers too? Using some of your soulblood to bind it to that child surely must've costed you almost a decade's worth of trai—"

Before he could finish, Yi Rou cut into his speech, "It was only some of my cultivation that was expended, nothing more. I...I only felt sorry for that child...."

A twinge of pain streaked across Yi Gang's eyes at that.

"You must've been thinking about Qi Ming, weren't you. That child had the same 'Qi' character as well..."

Yi Rou froze. The very mention of 'Qi Ming' had that much of an

effect on her, with pain overcoming every other emotions in her eyes by a large margin.

Qi Ming was her child from long ago. When Qi Ming was born, it cried seven times as soon as its head peaked out from the carapace of its shell, thus why he was called 'Qi Ming'.

Qi Ming had been an extremely obedient and outrageously talented child, making every other members of the Jian to regard Qi Ming as their last hope. But....

Yi Gang immediately regretted saying the name as soon as it left his mouth. Qi Ming had been his child too, and Yi Rou was still very much mournful whenever the topic was brought up.

Trying his best to erase the pained look on his own face, he drew closer to his wife and placed a hand onto her shoulder. He had nothing comforting to say, but rather, words filled with determination.

“Don’t worry, we’ll definitely find him, and when we do, we’ll take revenge for our child!

“He fled with half his life half a year ago, but he’s still in the class six area somewhere. There’s no way he’ll be able to flee with so many individuals looking for him.

“He won’t die an easy death!!”

.....

With supper eaten, Bai Yunfei was free to relax on the stone he was on, both hands behind his head so he could look up at the starry canopus.

Many things had happened today. Bai Yunfei didn’t expect to be so deep into the class six area first of all, but with the long series of events that started with the thunderberry, Bai Yunfei just had to accept it for what it was.

“I’m a Soul Exalt now, and I don’t need to look for a soulbeast to

make a contract with either. Seems like I've accomplished all my goals in the Soulbeast Forest by accident....” Bai Yunfei chuckled, “what should I do next then? Should I leave? Or should I stick around?

“This is already the deepest part of the class six area, so I should head south to get to the center, and head west from there. I should be able to leave the forest if I keep walking and reach the capital like I planned....”

With all his preparations made, Bai Yunfei started to reconfirm everything else that needed to be done for his future trip.

.....

The night passed by without any further incident.

The next morning, Bai Yunfei woke up ready to go, but when he looked up to the skies to find his direction....

The sun was nowhere in sight.

Today was a cloudy day.

It was a completely cloudy day, with not a speck of blue to be seen from above the gray blanket of clouds. Despite being already late in the morning, the only things to be seen were the black and gray clouds, looking like they were ready to let loose rain at any given moment.

“Where....where do I go then?” Bai Yunfei muttered uncertainty.

Navigational tools were pointless in the forest as the geography of the place rendered them all useless, and without the sun there to point his direction, Bai Yunfei didn't know which direction was what.

Meaning.....he was completely clueless on where to go.

“How should I go about this? If I travel around without knowing where's where, I'll probably end up going even deeper into the forest!”

As vexed as he was, Bai Yunfei shrugged. “Not sure if I’ll be able to find any guiding grass. Even if I do, I’ll be wandering around either way until I find it. Guess just walking around’s all I can do.”

All around Bai Yunfei were four different mountains that obscured the nearby landscape, making it even more difficult for Bai Yunfei to tell.

“Xiao Qi,” He spoke at last, “fly up over the mountains and see the surroundings.”

“Chirp!!”

Heeding his command, Xiao Qi shifted into the size of an eagle and took off into the skies.

Now several hundred meters into the air, Xiao Qi surveyed the area once over. But when its eyes looked to the mountain behind, it froze in the air as if it saw something startling.

Seeing how Xiao Qi was staring so intently at the direction, Bai Yunfei looked quizzically at it, “Is something the matter?”

Chapter 431: Barren Battleground

Ascending into the skies by using elemental fire as platforms to leap on, Bai Yunfei quickly made his way up to look at what Xiao Qi had found....

Thanks to the ‘coil’ form, Bai Yunfei was already quite proficient with traveling through the skies using this method. It took him a few attempts to do it now that he was a proper early-stage Soul Exalt, but overall, there weren’t any problems.

“What did you find, Xiao Qi?” Bai Yunfei asked. But then when he looked at the same direction as Xiao Qi, his jaws dropped open.

“Wha—what is this?!” He managed to say after some time.

The Soulbeast Forest—as its name implied—was a forest with an ocean full of trees. These trees were tall and plentiful, and the area in front of Bai Yunfei was only just a small portion of the overall geography.

But what Bai Yunfei was looking at in front of him wasn’t another patch of trees, but....a barren wasteland!

A barren wasteland that extended for hundreds and hundreds of kilometers!

From the base of the mountain where Bai Yunfei was to roughly ten kilometers towards the wastelands marked a good portion of the forest where plenty of trees were still growing, if not felled in some places. With each incremental kilometer after that, the trees started to thin out, and then after one final kilometer, there was absolutely nothing but a wasteland!

There were no trees, no grass, and no mountains.

But what it did have was....absolutely nothing for kilometers all around. There was even a tremendous gulch on the left side of the wastelands!

Even from his faraway position, Bai Yunfei was still able to see that this gulch was several hundred meters deep at the very least!

And the most terrifying thing was that it felt like if a giant mouth was the one responsible for creating the gulch....

In the end, it felt like a natural disaster had befallen that entire area to reduce it from a lush forest to a destroyed wasteland.

Still in somewhat of a shock as he looked at the sight, Bai Yunfei's eyes flashed brightly with light.

“This looks a little familiar, it kind of looks like a....”

“A battleground!!”

Spitting out those two words aloud, Bai Yunfei felt his heart skip a beat in shock.

This wasteland in front of him was a textbook example of the aftermath of a tremendous battle!

Bai Yunfei fought plenty of battles before with other soulbeasts where the aftermath was just like this, but smaller in scale. The area around them would be stripped of plant life, rock and sand were scattered to the skies, and the ground scarred with craters and ravines.

The only difference between the aftermath of Bai Yunfei's battles and this was one was the size. Bai Yunfei's battles only created a field of nothing about fifty meters in radius at most, but Bai Yunfei couldn't even begin to tell just how big this wasteland was!

“But....what kind of battle would leave behind such a tremendous sight like this?”

“Xiao Qi, I'm heading over, bring Xiao Lan with you!”

“Chirp!!”

.....

Stepping onto his Tempest Sword, Bai Yunfei took off towards

the wasteland while Xiao Qi carried a miniature-sized Xiao Lan.

Bai Yunfei came to a stop above the wastelands before making his descent to inspect the area.

Now that he was closer to the area, Bai Yunfei felt even more shock than before. It was a lot bigger than he originally guessed, and he could clearly see many different craters hundreds of meters deep scattered across the area as if a meteor storm had fallen onto the area.

But he knew that this was the aftermath of several explosions of elemental energy.

Most of the craters still had some water filling the bottom-most parts of them, with fragments of trees rotting away under the waters, meaning that they've been there for a considerably long time by now.

Some of the trees were already starting to grow moss.

Observing the area from the skies, Bai Yunfei was quiet for a while to gather his thoughts.

"I don't know what happened here, but it must've happened at least half a year ago. It must've been a fierce battle if no grass is growing. There aren't any soulbeasts around either, is it because of this battle? If they're afraid of approaching this place even after so long had passed, the battle must've been extremely terrifying!"

From down below, something caught his eye, "What's that?!"

In one of the empty craters was something that stood out amongst its surroundings. It was smaller in size and quite familiar, just like a....

"A footprint!!" Exclaimed Bai Yunfei. There was the footprint of a soulbeast in the crater!

Upon closer investigation, the footprint looked reptilian in nature—like a lizard—but many times bigger!! The entire footprint

was close to a hundred meters, and the claw marks were dozens of meters in length themselves!

Looking even farther ahead, several more identical footprints were identified.

“The owner of this foot is huge!!”

Sneaking a glance at the airborne Xiao Lan, Bai Yunfei compared the two sizes. If the blue-eyes wyrm were at its largest, it'd footprints would still be the size of an ant compared to this footprint!

“How does a fight of this magnitude happen in the class six area? It's just not right....a tremendous soulbeast like this shouldn't be in the class six area...

“Was this....a battle between Soul Exalts?! Class seven soulbeasts?!” His eyes widened at the potential thought.

The more he thought about it, the more plausible it sounded. The only ones capable of inflicting such tremendous devastation onto the world like this were of the Soul Exalt stage and higher....

The closer he got to the battlefield, the bigger the crater in the middle got. By time he was down on the ground, the crater was already over five kilometers in diameter, and the entire bottom half submerged with water!

Now standing above the crater, Bai Yunfei was free to look at over half of the entire battlefield. There was nothing else to this place but the barren grounds, and now that the shock was gone, Bai Yunfei didn't really see anything else of interest.

As he prepared to leave however, something else caught his eye.

“Whats this?”

Just as he turned around, his eyes caught onto a flash of light coming from the ground. Even with the clouds making it very dim in the area, the light was still enough to catch Bai Yunfei's

attention.

Flying another kilometer to the spot, Bai Yunfei squinted his eyes to look at the object shining in the ground.

Right there was a black object halfway stuck in the ground, but the part that was above the ground was shining with light.

Curious, Bai Yunfei descended next to the object and alighted from the sword. Stooping over, he grabbed hold of the item and pulled at it.

“Crack!!” Dislodging the object from the ground, Bai Yunfei pulled out a black metallic ‘plate’ the size of a brick. The edges of the ‘plate’ was curved so that one side was wide, and the other side was pointy. It was only two fingers in thickness, but the weight of the object was a hundred and fifty kilograms almost.

Equipment Grade: Low Earth

Elemental Affinity: Water

Defense: 600

Upgrade Requirement: 90 Soulpoints

A string of information trailed into his mind as soon as his hand touched the object.

“This...this is a low-earth tier equipment?!” He stared at the plate in his hand in absolute befuddlement.

Staring at the object, Bai Yunfei noticed something familiar about it. “Hold on, this looks a little strange. It looks kind of like.....”

“A scale!!”

Realization struck Bai Yunfei like a bolt of lightning.

What he was holding in his hand was without a doubt the scale of a soulbeast of some kind!

Then without warning, the water within the largest crater there

began to churl and glow a deep blue light. Surging intensely with each passing second, the lake soon gave rise to a waterspout that shot itself out from the crater to come circling around Bai Yunfei!

Chapter 432: Dragon's Roar

Having formed out completely out of the blue, the water spout startled Bai Yunfei. By the time he had noticed it coming at him, the spout was almost about to collide with him!

Fortunately, Bai Yunfei's reaction had been just as quick. Though he didn't have enough time to bring up the Cataclysmic Seal, his arms did go up, using the scale he had just picked up as a shield to have the water spout collide with that rather than him!

“Bang!!”

There was a muffled crack when the water spout smashed into the scale. With his hands holding onto the scale when impact happened, Bai Yunfei felt like his arms were on the verge snapping off. The force of the collision was large enough to send Bai Yunfei away, much to his relief, but then before he could get far, a sudden tightening sensation around his waist immediately dashed away any hope of escape!

Rather than bouncing off when hitting the scale, the water spout had instead split around it to wrap around Bai Yunfei's waist behind it!

Though clearly being made of water, the spout felt more like steel wrapped around his waist. Just having it tighten around him felt like his organs would pop from the pressure.

Coming to a complete stop, Bai Yunfei had only enough time to groan before he was sent flying in the opposite direction!

The force of this whiplash wrestled away the scale from Bai Yunfei's hands, dropping it to the ground as he was sent flying. From within his body, there was the slightest of cracks from his bones starting to creak and break!

“Pft!!”

Unable to stop himself, a bloody mist escaped from Bai Yunfei's

mouth. Terrified, Bai Yunfei knew that if nothing was to be done about this, the tightening force of the spout would soon force all of his intestines out from his mouth!

It had even been two seconds since the attack began!

“Chirp!!!!”

In that one crucial moment, Xiao Qi came storming in with a furious chirp!

Its anger felt no limit when it saw what was going on with Bai Yunfei. Lighting up in a flash of green, it delivered a stroke of elemental wind to try and cleave the two kilometer long water spout in two

Whistling in the air as it traveled, the blade of elemental wind made its way over to the spout before passing through it, smashing into the ground and sending rubble flying.

But....the water spout was completely unharmed!

Instead of falling apart when it was cut, the water spout remained completely intact when the blade cut into it by reattaching the two sides!

But Bai Yunfei was still in danger and was now five hundred meters away from his original position!

“Damn!” Cursing to himself, Bai Yunfei raised his right hand up into the air. Blood dripped from his mouth as he sent soulforce into the Flameblade Bracer, materializing a blade of fire next to it.

And now that he had a weapon, Bai Yunfei aimed it down at the water spout binding his waist!

“Bang!!”

Elemental water blew apart when the blade of fire smashed into the water spout, sizzling as the water started to evaporate. He was trying his best to evaporate the water spout with the fire, but it was no use. The water spout was already starting to regenerate in

elemental water!

No matter how hot the Winged Flame Blade was, it wasn't enough to evaporate the water spout! At most, the water spout would lose half of its volume, but then it'd flash bright blue and then regain its lost volume instantly!

And by now, Bai Yunfei was only just a hundred meters away from the crater!

“Xiao Qi!”

Both of Bai Yunfei's eyes were bloodshot, but he still managed to gather elemental fire to his feet in an attempt to counteract against the water spout's pull, but even that was no use.

At his command, Xiao Qi came flying down again. Rather than using any elemental energy, Xiao Qi unleashed three Spatial Edges to travel silently down onto a segment of the spout where Bai Yunfei wasn't.

The Spatial Edges were traveling faster than the blades of wind beforehand, and under Xiao Qi's expert control, it managed to strike and bisect the water spout.

When it struck, Bai Yunfei was only just about to be sent into the crater!

And this time, the water spout had finally been fully dissected without coming back together!

“Whoosh!”

The part of the water spout extending from the crater fell back down, powerless to attack at Bai Yunfei like before. The middle part of the spout exploded into a fine cloud of mist, showering the area with elemental water.

The three Spatial Edges then inserted themselves into the ground, leaving behind three separate lunar-shaped marks.

Just one footstep away from the crater now, Bai Yunfei sighed in

relief as he felt the water spout around his waist lose grip. Pushing back, he leapt away from the crater!

Still, the power in the water spout hadn't been completely lost. As he leapt back, the remaining segment of the spout tried to pull him back towards the crater. Raising his right hand, Bai Yunfei punched at it with all his might!

“Bang!”

The punch shattered the cohesive power keeping the spout together and evaporated the water with a concentrated burst of elemental fire.

Now completely free, Bai Yunfei renewed his retreat in a blaze of elemental fire to protect him from anything else!

In three short seconds, Bai Yunfei managed to retreat back one full kilometer. Shaken from his escape, Bai Yunfei's entire back was slick with sweat.

Whilst he was being pulled towards the crater, Bai Yunfei felt like the crater had been the maws of a giant beast. If he had fallen in, death would've been certain!

Whatever it was that was attacking him, Bai Yunfei didn't know. What he did now was that this attack was completely and utterly terrifying--even now, his body was trembling.

He had to escape!

Escape at full throttle!

The farther away he got from this place, the better, or else he'd die!

In a flash of light, the Cataclysmic Seal flew out from the Violet Soul Ring. Using as much as the Cataclysmic Seal could handle, Bai Yunfei activated its barrier to protect himself while simultaneously going through the hand seals for the 'coil' form.

Combined with the flash of orange and red light, Bai Yunfei was

able to fly back yet another kilometer!

“Rrrr.....”

Suddenly, a low but deep grumble was heard.

The ground beneath Bai Yunfei’s feet started to tremble as the grumble began to grow louder and louder.

From far away, the water within the giant crater was starting to swirl, turning into a giant whirlpool.

And from within the whirlpool came a suffocating amount of aura!

“Roarrrr!!!”

As if being able to finally unburden itself, a furious roar was unleashed towards the heavens with a volume so loud it felt as if it was trying to reach the heavens!

Like a verbal tidal wave, the roar surged straight into Bai Yunfei’s eardrums. Rattling his head, the sound continued to wreak havoc onto his entire body, forcing him to lose control over his body and puke out a mouthful of blood!

This roar wasn’t one that any normal lion or tiger would make.

This was the roar of a....dragon!!

Chapter 433: Appearance of the Powerful!

So loud was the roar did Bai Yunfei decide to turn around from his run in morbid curiosity. Turning his head, Bai Yunfei saw a giant ball of water flying overhead!

How big was it?

A kilometer in diameter!!

In other words, all of the water that had accumulated within the crater was now rising into the air!

A powerful blue glow was surrounding all that water and slowly manipulating it to swirl.

Slowly....the water began to compress in on itself!

Within two moments, the ball of water went from being a kilometer in diameter to being only a hundred meters!

And with the blinding blue light radiating from it, the ball was like a miniature blue sun!

Bai Yunfei's eyes dilated with fright. There was a good few kilometers between him and the ball now, but the sheer amount of elemental water being compressed was enough to make him unsteady.

He'd have to keep on running!

If that sphere of water were to hit him....there wouldn't even be a sliver of him left!

Aside from the ball of water, there was yet another terrifying existence still in that crater. A being that hadn't shown its aura until after that roar.

But now that it revealed itself, Bai Yunfei was faced with the full brunt of its existence!

"Cl—class seven!!" He stuttered. "A....late-stage class seven!"

.....

From the depths of the crater, a figure was stepping out. It wore robes as black as the night with a miasmic aura dark enough to obscure the figure's appearance. The only thing to be seen from its face was a pair of red vertical slits where the eyes should be. Its hands sharp with how the nails extended farther than it should be, a frosty sheen emanating from the nails.

A faint blue light was spiralling around the figure as well, like spirals of water.

"Keke...." Arching his shoulders, the man gave a chilling laugh before he looked up to the air. When his head lifted up, the sphere of water overhead compressed even more before suddenly moving.

When it started to move, dread flooded Bai Yunfei's mind.

Would this be the end of him?

"Eh?!"

But then whilst he was despairing, he noticed something!

The ball of water wasn't flying towards him!

Whistling through the air as it traveled, the sphere of water was flying not towards Bai Yunfei, but....to the empty space to the right!

Not a single living thing was in the area where the ball of water was heading. But just two hundred meters above the ground, the air around there was starting to ripple. Like if being distorted, the space in the area suddenly opened up as if there was a door of some kind, allowing for a figure to step out!

It was an elderly man with white hair that stepped out from this space. And as soon as he appeared, the first thing to greet him was a blue miniature-sized sun!

"Hmph!" Unphased, the elder raised his right palm up. A wave of white light gathered at the center, and then without a care in the

world, he pressed it against the ball!

“Bang!”

Somehow, the ball of water came to a sudden stop as soon as it touched his palm!

Merely one second after coming into contact with the ball of water, the eyes of the old man narrowed together in concentration. The white light from his hands started to spread over the surface of the ball as elemental ice was emitted from his palm. Crinkling, the white light continued to spread more and more—the ball of water was turning into a ball of ice!

In just two short moments, the entire ball of water had been frozen into ice!

And in one last stroke, the elderly man slammed the ball back down into the crater to smash the figure still standing above it!

“Boom!!”

The black silhouette leapt out to meet the icy meteor, colliding noisily with it. It halted briefly in momentum before cracks formed all over the surface.

Then, without at all harming the figure underneath it, the ball of ice crumbled to pieces.

Now unobstructed, the black silhouette traveled two hundred meters up into the air to stand on the same plane as the elderly man.

It was a relatively simple interaction between the two, but the amount of elemental fire both combatants used was so stifling Bai Yunfei found it hard to breathe.

The old man was without a doubt a Soul King!

And the black silhouette a late-stage Soul King!

Now at the very edge of the wastelands, Bai Yunfei was rejuvenated. Safe from harm, he felt like life had given him yet

another chance.

Traumatized, Bai Yunfei looked back to where the two Soul Kings were standing. Coming to a stop, he jumped into a nearby tree and began to hide his aura as much as he could through the usage of the Soul Concealment Art. To maximize his hiding, Bai Yunfei took out the Walk-on Strawhat and capped it onto his head.

Then, he didn't move an inch from his spot.

Following his command, Xiao Qi took the blue-eyes wyrm to a giant tree and hide within the treetops to observe the situation.

There was a reason why he came to a stop to observe the situation.

When he turned his head back a moment ago, another distortion in space had appeared behind the elder in white. Two figures stepped out from it, revealing the back-most person to be....

Xing Yuan!

The very same man he fought not too long ago in the class five area of the forest. The fifth elder of the Beast Taming School, Xing Yuan!

At a loss for words at what this situation was becoming, Bai Yunfei decided to hide. Trying to run away would only result in his soulforce being leaked out, so it was within his best interests to try and stay hidden.

.....

While not explicitly noticed, Xing Yuan turned towards Bai Yunfei's direction when he stepped out from beyond the spatial distortion.

"What is it, Xing Yuan?" The gray-robed elder in front of him asked.

Xing Yuan peered suspiciously at the forest. "I could've sworn somebody was just there...." he muttered.

Glancing in the same direction, the elder's eyes flashed with light for a brief second before blinking again. "An ant and nothing more. Ignore it."

"Yes, elder Lin...." Heeding his command, Xing Yuan turned away to stand upright and completely still. While he was the fifth elder of his school, he was nothing more than a whelping in front of the second and third elders.

The whole reason he was even here in the forest was to be their scout. So now that the goal had been found, he had no reason to do anything else. He had neither the right to fight or even speak for this upcoming battle.

Standing respectfully behind the second and third elder, Xing Yuan stared at the figure who was giving each of the three a hateful glare, gulping silently to himself in fear.

"Is that him? The terrifying being that injured the first elder when ambushed half a year ago? The one that escaped soon afterwards...."

"The Black Dragon King....."

Chapter 434: Black Dragon King

Hidden and completely still in his hiding spot, Bai Yunfei observed the four figures from a distance. It was a little blurry, but with his powers as a Soul Exalt, the sight was clear enough given the distance.

Back when the gray-robed elder in front of Xing Yuan looked at his direction, it was like an icy stab through his heart. His body trembled violently and his face paled drastically.

“He saw me! He sees me!!” Goosebumps rose all over his skin. There was not a single doubt in his mind that the elderly man had seen him! He might’ve hidden himself from Xing Yuan’s senses, but there was no way he’d be able to hide from the Soul King!

But the Soul King didn’t budge from his spot. Not even Xing Yuan looked like he cared.

Somehow, it didn’t seem like the Soul King really cared about Bai Yunfei.

“What do I do? What should I do? Should I run?” Bai Yunfei was thoroughly drenched with sweat. Although it didn’t seem like the Soul King cared about him, Bai Yunfei couldn’t guarantee that Xing Yuan wouldn’t do the same if he found out.

He was stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Thanks to being bound by the water spout, he had suffered heavy wounds from it. Not only were his ribs cracked, his lungs were in such a state that whenever he breathed, he’d feel an acute pain in them.

If Xing Yuan were to run after him now, Bai Yunfei would have no chance of victory.

“Xing Yuan hasn’t found me yet, and the other three don’t see me as anything but an ant, so I should be safe for now. I just need to find the best time to run away.....” Aside from Xing Yuan, Bai

Yunfei was absolutely sure that the other three individuals knew he existed, they just didn't care to bother about him.

Running now would be a hasty action. His top priority was to sit here and let his wounds heal first.

Using a little bit of soulforce from this distance wouldn't be enough to ping Xing Yuan's notice. Carefully and slowly, Bai Yunfei applied some soulforce to his body to use the Face Change Technique to alter his face. As the soulforce washed over his body, he waited for the transformation to finish before then starting the process to heal his wounds.

.....

The figure in black stared unflinchingly at the two elders, a barely noticeable light flashing in his eyes. "Liang Xing, you whelping. I just knew you'd be waiting here," he cackled. "Where is that other whelping, Yan Fei? Did you really think just two of you would be enough to capture me?"

The figure was of course talking about the two elders only. Xing Yuan wasn't even a point of consideration to be brought up.

Liang Xing was the one in white. A late-stage Soul King of the ice affinity and second elder of the Beast Taming School.

The other person with him was the third elder, Lin Hefan, a mid-stage Soul King with the wind affinity.

The 'Yan Fei' spoken about earlier was the first elder of the Beast Taming School.

"Black Dragon King," Liang Xing chuckled, "how do you know the first elder isn't here? You were beaten halfway to death by us half a year ago, while you managed to heal since then, do you really think you'll be able to escape us this time? I strongly suggest you allow us to place the seal onto you and submit to the Beast Taming School. That is your destiny."

"Submit? You ask me to submit?!" Fiery indignation burst to life

into the Black Dragon King's eyes. "What bullsh*t destiny! Even if I died, I would never be a soul puppet of your school! You're dreaming if you think you can force the Black Dragon King to submit! Come try it if you think yourself strong enough! We'll see if you can beat me today!"

So loud was his roar that even Bai Yunfei had been able to hear who this figure was from his hiding spot.

The 'Black Dragon King'.

Those three words sent him into shock. He drew in closer to look at the figure in amazement.

"The Black Dragon King? He's the Black Dragon King?!" He never thought that the Black Dragon King of all people would be the one to attack him from within the crater!

It was the Black Dragon King that he managed to escape with his life from!

He couldn't help but shiver at the memory.

.....

The Black Dragon King, a late-stage class seven and one of the Eight Soulbeast Rulers!

'Black Dragon' was what it first called itself when it first appeared a hundred years ago. Storming into the world by killing and devouring its predecessor, the Blue Snake King, its ensuing roar brought shockwaves throughout the entire soul cultivator and soulbeast world alike!

Although it called itself a 'Black Dragon', its body wasn't at all that of a 'dragon', but rather that of a....jiao.

TL Note: See [here](#) for what a Jiaolong looks like

A jiao was much closer to being an oriental dragon than the blue-eyes wyrm, but still not quite there to being considered a true dragon. They were a dying breed compared to their numbers from

millenniums ago, so right now, there was only one recorded sighting of a black jiao.

It went without question that this specific jiao was probably over a thousand years old. It must've hid itself patiently until a hundred years ago before storming onto the continent to strike terror into both soul cultivator and soulbeast alike!

Class seven soulbeasts were capable of two things: the ability to take human form and the ability to fully awaken their rationality. They were beings that transcended into a whole different world, but in the world of soulbeasts, there was one constant rule from one soulbeast to another....

Soulbeasts of the class seven level couldn't kill one another whenever they wanted to!

The battle for evolution under the class seven level could best be described as being mindless almost. Instinct and desire fueled the drive for soulbeasts to slaughter one another, and that was how their world worked.

Survival of the fittest.

But upon reaching the class seven level, it was a world with new rules.

Practically every single class seven soulbeast was a part of one ruling body where agreements and rules were set up.

Without any justifications such as revenge, they could not kill another class seven soulbeast!!

After surviving the cruel world that was the class six level and below, every class seven soulbeast knew that the path to power was a hard one, and that there was no point trying to kill one another.

But when the Black Dragon King appeared, he completely destroyed the rules put into place by killing not only the Blue Snake King, but another five class seven soulbeasts!

When asked why, the only response they got was so the Black Dragon King could swallow their soulgems and grow even stronger!

His actions infuriated every single soulbeast of the class seven level, prompting mass action against him in the form of banishment from the class seven area and injuries that nearly killed him.

But his anger didn't weaken even after banishment.

The Tianhun Empire was its next target and was basked in blood and fire as it devoured soul cultivator by the dozen.

Finally, the strongest of the Tianhun School organized a group of other mighty soul cultivators into a subjugation group of over a dozen people. Joined together, they managed to fight back against the Black Dragon King and inflict many wounds onto him.

He vanished into thin air after that. For dozens of years, not even a single thing was heard from him before he appeared again thirty years after.

This time, he was found in the deepest parts of the class six area where it killed yet another three class seven soulbeasts!

Another group of soul cultivators came forward again several years after that. Managing to wipe out one of the schools sent to kill him, the Black Dragon King then managed to devour two more Soul Kings and over a thousand men!

After that, the Black Dragon King would appear throughout history in a storm of brimstone and fire. No matter if it was the soul cultivator world or the soulbeast world, the casualties were massive, and no experts brought in was enough to kill him.

His last appearance had been from five years ago near the northwest frontier of the Soulbeast Forest. In that event, he managed to kill a pair of newly evolved class seven soulbeasts who were planning to travel into the human world.

Those two class seven soulbeasts were in fact another one of the Jian....

Chapter 435: A Huge Battle Incoming!

The existence of an ancient soulbeast like the black jiao wasn't widely circulated in the world of soul cultivators. Many didn't even know that there was such a species until the Black Dragon King descended onto the continent.

As a soulbeast whose species was once prominent in the far more chaotic and primeval past, the strength of a black jiao was never put into question. Soulbeasts of the same stage had no chance against one, and those a stage higher stood a good chance at losing as well.

When the Black Dragon King first appeared, it was a mid-stage class seven soulbeast. It was only after devouring the soulgem of the late-stage class seven Blue Snake King that it became a late-stage class seven as well.

But like other soulbeasts, the Black Dragon King found himself at a stoppage in his path for power. Hundreds of years of slaughter and devouring countless individuals for their power was barely giving him progress towards reaching the limits of a class seven.

It wasn't until half a year ago that the Black Dragon King picked a secluded part of the class six area of the forest in preparation to make the attempt.

Never did he imagine that four Soul Kings would ambush him whilst he was busy meditating.

Three of the four Soul Kings were the first to third elders from the Beast Taming School, but the last one was a person he didn't recognize. In any case, the first elder was hoping to make use of the Black Dragon King's vulnerability to enforce a seal onto him and turn him into a soulbeast puppet!

Having lived a life fraught with battle and strife, the Black Dragon King was infuriated. It lived through plenty of ambushes

and attempts on its life, but when had it ever considered a human being worthy to care about?

With all that said, the battle that came next had been surprisingly tough on him. The four of them were on the verge of winning when the Black Dragon King decided to unleash his final life-saving move, injuring the first elder and killing the fourth Soul King he didn't know.

Now injured, the three survivors weren't able to prevent the Black Dragon King from escaping with his life.

What followed next was a game of cat and mouse between soul cultivator and soulbeast. As an expert of the game, the Black Dragon King went against all expectations by returning to the battlefield and hiding there by going into hibernation and concealing his aura completely.

News of the battle was spread to the many powerful individuals of the continent, many of them encouraged to enter the class six area of the forest in search of the Black Dragon King. They all wanted to find and kill him—not only to eradicate the scourge of the continent and obtain its soulgem, but most importantly, 'that' object it possessed....

The priceless 'thing' that had been completely lost since a millenia ago, reappearing only when the Black Dragon King announced himself to the world!

No matter how hard they searched, however, no one was able to find the Black Dragon King, causing many of them to quit in the end.

Many had thought the Black Dragon King had already fled to some faraway corner of the empire, but there were a few that stayed behind in the forest to look for him, such as the Beast Taming School and the Two Winged Kings....

Injured by the Black Dragon King, the first elder of the Beast

Taming School went back first. The second and third elders were left to lead the search efforts. The fifth elder, Xing Yuan, was ordered to pay attention to the battlegrounds since there was a chance that the Black Dragon King would be around.

None of the elders thought what the first elder would be true, but they complied with his orders nonetheless.

It was true though!

The place that the Black Dragon King awakened was in the place the first elder said he'd be at!

If there was one thing Liang Xing was sure about, it was that the Black Dragon King wasn't fully recovered yet. The first elder's wounds were estimated to take at least ten years to heal. An ancient soulbeast like the Black Dragon King would surely take less time than ten years to heal from wounds of the same magnitude, but half a year was far too short to be right.

Either way, there were more than just two Soul Kings here....

.....

Liang Xing's words infuriated the Black Dragon King. Snarling, he thrust both palms outwards to form claws with them both. Light as blue as the ocean swirled around into the space in front of his palms before he swung his hands!

The blue lights were only big enough to cover the Black Dragon King's fists, but when they extended forth from them, they extended forwards to grow hundreds of times bigger. They were absorbing the ambient elemental water in the area to grow even larger before shooting countless bolts of water to pepper the three men!

Fear gripped at Xing Yuan's body as he watched the bolts of water approach. The second and third elders may be in front of him, but the attack was still enough for his body to tremble uncontrollably.

“Hmph!” Liang Xing snorted. His right palm came up to exude a large but dreadful amount of white frost. On the other side, Lin Hefan did the same with his own hand, but a green light came forth before a giant figure appeared in front of him.

“Cawww!!”

“Roarr!!”

Two figures appeared into the area amidst an explosion of sound and light as white and green mixed together. Countless blades of wind were shot out at the same time, cutting apart any of the bolts of water coming at Lin Hefan while the bolts of water aimed at Liang Xing were inexplicably frozen in midair as if stuck!

Upon closer observation, they were indeed frozen—into ice that is!

In no time at all, the elemental water in the area had been overtaken by elemental ice!

By Lin Hefan’s side was a type of green lion the size of an elephant, and by Liang Xing’s side was a large avian with a wingspan of over a hundred meters!

“A mid-stage class seven Wind Squaller!” Bai Yunfei couldn’t help but gasp under his breath. This rare soulbeast was of the very same species as the one Jing Mingfeng contracted with; and this one in particular was a class seven to boot!

The other soulbeast drove the stake of shock even deeper in Bai Yunfei’s heart, “And that’s...a late-stage class seven Glacial Roc!”

The Black Dragon King’s eyes narrowed slightly at the two, “The Glacial Roc King and the Wind Squaller King....you were made into soulbeast puppets by the humans I see. Rather than stay like this, you may as well let me devour you and save yourselves from the humiliation.”

These two soulbeasts were once the kings of their species, but not strong enough to be considered a part of the Eight Soulbeast

Rulers. They were nonetheless very strong, so it was a shame to see them reduced to puppets of the Beast Taming School.

“Your soulbeasts weren’t enough to defeat me half a year ago, and yet you’re trying so again? So be it then,” The Black Dragon King cackled, “I helped the Ape King free half a year ago, so I’ll devour these two soulbeasts as well today!”

“You!!” The pejorativeness of the Black Dragon King’s words caused annoyance to flare up in Liang Xing’s head.

He had once a mid-stage class seven fireclad ape, but that one had been killed and seemingly devoured by the Black Dragon King the last time they fought.

Lin Hefan had only one soulbeast out since his other class seven soulbeast had perished as well, though his had perished not from the battle with the Black Dragon King but after it when he went searching for him.

There were plenty of class seven soulbeasts that came looking for the Black Dragon King. With how large the class six area was, it still wasn’t uncommon enough for the Beast Taming School to come across one of the class seven soulbeasts.

With each meeting came a battle since every single soulbeast that held any iota of rationality within them hated the Beast Taming School.

“Stop your yapping and fight!” Liang Xing’s eyes flashed dangerously, his mouth saying something that only Lin Hefan could understand.

“You wish for our fight to end so soon?” The Black Dragon King cackled again, his hands again starting to shine with blue light, “Then allow me to oblige!”

Strands of soulforce exploded into every direction before pulling back every single elemental energy in the area—

—Another battle of epic proportions was on the verge of breaking

out!

Chapter 436: The Fearless Black Dragon King

At his command, the glacial roc took into the skies, shrieking as it extended its wings wide. Icicles numbering in the thousand materialized out of thin air to fly at the Black Dragon King like a storm of hail!

The wind squaller moved synchronously with the roc. Extending its jaws wide open, it let loose a burst of elemental wind to attack it from another direction!

Meanwhile, Liang Xing, Lin Hefan, and even Xing Yuan were all retreating backwards to gain some distance from the Black Dragon King.

Since beast tamers used their soulbeast puppets to fight, they normally didn't even need to be on the battlefield.

Furthermore, the Black Dragon King was already flying towards them while their soulbeasts were attacking, prompting the need to move into safety.

The soulbeast puppets were once mighty soulbeasts standing at the top of the class seven level. But now that they were puppets, they were nothing more than tools to be used at will. Even though

they were seemingly without emotions now, the slightest of sorrow could be heard whenever they roared....

The roars were loud to be heard by Bai Yunfei even from his hiding spot far away. Much to his surprise, he too felt sorrow, but not from the roars of the soulbeasts.

Somehow, the feeling of sorrow was coming from Xiao Qi of all places. Staring at the two soulbeast puppets from its perch in the trees, an indescribable feeling of sorrow was coming from Xiao Qi as well. It didn't know for what reason why this feeling was happening, but it started when it heard their roars.

“The Beast Taming School....” Bai Yunfei spat in disgust, he never imagined to come across the Beast Taming School here as well.

“Roarr!!!”

An indignant roar exploded forth from the Black Dragon’s mouth as he prepared himself to fight. Both of his hands were shining with light to gather elemental water into the area in front of him. They materialized into two different balls of blue light; the ball on the left measuring at having a radius of a hundred meters to attack the burst of elemental wind, while the ball on the right transforming into a storm of miniature blue spheres to individually strike down each of the icicles shot by the glacial roc.

“Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang....”

“Boom!!!”

A series of explosions rung out one after another whenever one ball of elemental water collided with another one of the icicles, and with each explosion, elemental energy scattered apart here and there.

Amidst the chain explosions, the Black Dragon King had his arms extended out again. Unlike before, the light around his hand was black like the fog around his body, and completely obscured his hands and making the red light in his eyes all the more ferocious looking.

Elemental water wasn’t the only element he was proficient at, he was actually a master of yet another element. One that was even more rare than water....

Elemental darkness!

Slightly arching his back, the Black Dragon King’s right heel lifted up slightly in preparation to move.

He grew still for a moment, and then....he flew out like an arrow towards the two soulbeasts!

Though it seemed like he was aiming to meet the two soulbeasts head on, the Black Dragon King suddenly changed directions just a mere two meters afterwards. Spinning around, his hands exploded with dark light right behind him!!

Riplets of elemental water started to vibrate in the area just a meter from where the Black Dragon King's back was. Then, from the ripples, a right hand came forth from the black smog to punch the Black Dragon King in the back.

“Bang! Bang!”

Two smashing sounds were heard; one was from when the two fists collided, the other was from when the Black Dragon King's left fist slammed into the back of his own right hand!

Waves of nearly-invisible energy flowed out from the point where both of his hands collided, disturbing the flow of black miasmic aura coming off from the Black Dragon King's person and revealing portions of his rather sinister-looking face. Even more importantly, the energy coming off from these waves were significant enough to slow down the two soulbeasts coming at him by a decent amount!

“Hmph!”

The fist retreated back into the ripples, having failed to do any damage to the Black Dragon King. A snort was heard, and then a figure in black came shooting out from an empty space a few hundred meters away from him!

“You're a hundred years too early to even think about ambushing me!!”

The Black Dragon King sneered. Turning his head back to look at the two incoming soulbeasts, his body flickered away from sight only to reappear to the left of the wind squaller. Unflinchingly, he let loose a mighty punch at the wind squaller when it tried to claw him!

“Bang!”

The wind squaller collided with the Black Dragon King, but rather than having the Black Dragon King move, the wind squaller was the only one to go flying backwards!

No sooner was the wind squaller taken care of for the time being did another pair of shiny claws come down to strike! Taking advantage of the wind squaller’s attempt, the glacial roc tried its best to ambush the Black Dragon King with claws filled with elemental ice!

A claw strike from a mid-stage class seven soulbeast was more than strong enough to tear off a piece of his body if he wasn’t careful! And with how weak the Black Dragon King was right now, his body would’ve been damaged more than just that.

His head flew up to stare at it, his eyes shining furiously with bloodthirst. Along with his head, his right hand shot straight up as if to clutch at the claws of the glacial roc!

The black miasma around his body swelled in volume in accordance with his actions. Seemingly having a will of its own, it flowed around his right hand and formed several black-colored claws--each claw about several meters in length!

“Roar!” As if the Azure Dragon himself was roaring, a primal roar escaped from the Black Dragon King’s mouth as he lashed out. His draconic claws managing to grab onto the glacial roc’s own claws!

Twisting his arm with a pulse of soulforce, the Black Dragon King swung the glacial roc a complete half-circle around him to send it flying into the wind squaller!

“Bang!”

Dropping onto the wind squaller like a giant piece of stone, the glacial roc stuck to the wind squaller like glue for nearly a kilometer before either of the two could regain their balance!

Though the two soulbeasts failed to do any damage to the Black

Dragon King, the person who tried to ambush the Black Dragon King had managed to successfully retreat several hundred meters already!

In just a short ten seconds, the Black Dragon King had been the target of several different methods of attack! From two different bursts of elemental energy, the ambush of a person in hiding, the onslaught of wind squaller and glacial roc....none had succeeded in hurting him!

In fact, the Black Dragon King had barely moved from his position in the skies!

It was with bated breath that Bai Yunfei watched the several events happen. Dumbstruck at it all, Bai Yunfei was in complete shock with how strong the Black Dragon King was.

“So....so this is one of the Eight Soulbeast Rulers....the late-stage class seven Black Dragon King is incredible....”

Chapter 437: Twister

Safe from harm now that the wind squaller and glacial roc were far enough away, the Black Dragon King gave a calm stare at the stunned group of humans in front of him. “You may try to hide your heads, but I can still see your tail. Half a year ago, the person helping the Beast Taming School tried to attack me in the same fashion. He might’ve been only a mid-stage Soul King when I slew him, but I will do the same today with you, you late-stage Soul King. Prepare to die!”

Known as Ma Wu, the assailant held his trembling hand with the other. “Black Dragon King,” a hoarse voice spoke out, “I admit you are well experienced in dealing with ambushes like this, but my goal wasn’t to try and kill you, but to verify something for myself....”

A smile crept onto his face, “From what we know, the Black Dragon King is a being powerful enough to not even allow someone like me enough room to breathe, let alone let ambush. And yet in that moment where I should’ve died, you instead turned around to deal with the two other soulbeasts. And how terrible you were in doing so, why is that?

“Perhaps....you were worried of something unpredictable happening right after my ambush?

“Something unpredictable, such as....your not yet healed wounds reopening up?”

The Black Dragon King’s eyes dilated slightly to give a level stare at Ma Wu. “Try and see for yourself.”

“.....”

Ma Wu didn’t respond. What he said earlier was only a conjecture to see how the Black Dragon King would respond. Whether or not the Black Dragon King was still injured or not, Ma

Wu still didn't know.

Logic dictated that the wounds the Black Dragon King sustained half a year ago would require more time in order to be fully recovered, but with that item in his possession...

"He's only pretending and bidding for time before someone else comes. Capture him before he can slip away!" Liang Xing spoke up, controlling the glacial roc into an attacking position once again.

Light flashed across the Black Dragon King's eye.

Indeed, he was truly waiting for another combatant to enter the fray, that way, he'd be able to make his escape while the two other parties fought each other for him.

The current situation right now would only lead to him being potentially captured if he waited, so waiting for a third party to come and stir the pot would increase his chances of escape, so the decision to run or run later was an easy one to make.

Having several men fight in tandem to capture him would make escape difficult, but several men fighting each other to capture him made escape easier.

Experience told him that much. He had many cases where people fought him to near death multiple times, but then they started to fight each other. Combined with him being so desperate to survive, he always ended up surviving the ordeal despite the odds.

They wouldn't want to kill him that easily either, not with the many valuable things the Black Dragon King had in his possession.

That too, was a form of human nature.

The glacial roc and wind squaller were already back and ready to fight the Black Dragon King by now. Stepping upwards, the Black Dragon King moved to higher grounds.

Rather than following the Black Dragon King up, the wind squaller stopped to glare at its prey. Throwing its head backwards,

the wind squaller howled ferociously. A large amount of elemental wind began to gather just a few hundred meters beneath the Black Dragon King, and in time, the elemental wind started to pick up in speed and swivel in a circle.

In the blink of an eye, a twister about a hundred meters in circumference had fully formed, completely obscuring the Black Dragon King from sight and completely ravaging the ground far below!

Countless boulders dozens of meters large were sucked into the twister, crashing into each other as they ascended into the skies. Surely anything else that was unfortunate enough to be reduced to dust in this twister!

The space between the ground and the skies were completely overtaken by this twister, and even the clouds were being sucked into the twister, making the area look like a calamity was soon to befall the place.

By this point, the Black Dragon King was already a good distance high up in the skies. Though he wanted to go even higher, the twister completely surrounded him prevented him from even moving after that.

Seeing that the twister around him was starting to shrink in size, the Black Dragon King's eyes narrowed. Black smog escaped from his fluttering black robes and began to mix in with the twister around him.

“You utterly insignificant ants!” Four disdainful words boomed forth from his mouth. His outstretched right hand unclenched, summoning a ball of water that quickly expanded to transform into a whirlpool.

As soon as it formed, the Black Dragon King tilted his hand down, directing the whirlpool to fall a hundred meters or so before exploding with a dazzling blue light. Cutting into the twister around it, the place soon became an area where only blue could be

seen. Strands of elemental water flowed into the whirlpool with increasing amounts, and before long, palm-sized whirlpool was just as tall as the twister!

A waterspout!

“Bang!!”

There was a loud crack as the water from the waterspout began to clash with the twister!

Rather than spinning in the opposite direction of the twister, the waterspout was rotating in the same direction and even speed as the twister!

The Black Dragon King stood at the center of both the twister and waterspout, controlling the latter and its growth. Almost instantaneously, blue light shined in the waterspout, making it resemble a pillar of blue light!

The blue light smashed into the ground with a heavy explosion, and just like that, it completely scattered apart the twister and the elemental wind feeding it!

Simultaneously, the loud, but pain-filled cry of the wind squaller could be heard. From its perch down below, the wind squaller was trembling from head to tail with blood leaking from its mouth. It looked agonized, and that its health had been majorly depleted.

Like the wind squaller, its controller, Lin Hefan, had a pale look on his face. Whatever the Black Dragon King did to stop the wind squaller’s attack, it had clearly done a fair share of damage to him as well.

“Im...impossible. His strength’s even stronger than it was half a year ago!” He cried. Soulfence was already being pumped through his body to mitigate the wounds, and the color in his face was already starting to look better than before.

“Skreee!!!”

It took several precious seconds for the Black Dragon King to counteract the twister created by the wind squaller. And in those precious seconds, it left the glacial roc more than enough time to launch yet another attack!

This time, the glacial roc was a kilometer above from where the Black Dragon King was. From this distance, the Black Dragon King could still see a white fog gathering around the glacial roc, and with a closer look, he could even see that several icy crystals were starting to take form in the shape of smaller birds. There were countless amounts of them, but they all floated in the air alongside the glacial roc's wings as if waiting to strike.

The glacial roc shrieked, and with that, the icy crystals flew down like arrows to pelt the Black Dragon King!

To use modern day terms to describe such an assault, it felt as though these icy birds were individual bombers ready to crash into the waterspout!

Their individual flight patterns changed on their way towards the waterspout, with one icy crystal directly above or below another one!

One by one, they smashed into the waterspout with a cracking sound, and with each successful hit, the surface of the waterspout begun to freeze over!

The onslaught of ice overwhelmed the waterspout, and in time, the entire waterspout became one giant pillar of ice, with the remaining fragments of ice drifting around it!

But that wasn't the end of it!

The glacial roc shrieked again. The white fog that had been formed due to the icy-cold temperatures around the waterspout suddenly constricted in on itself, and before it even touched upon the pillar of ice, several icicles came flying out from the fog to touch the pillar first!

From top to bottom, the entire pillar of ice was peppered with icicles!

Furthermore, the pillar of ice wasn't only being attacked from the outside in, several icicles were stabbing at the pillar from the inside as well!

On the passing moment where the final icicle perforated the pillar of ice, a dazzling glow of metallic light started to shine from the skies above. Piercing through the clouds that still remained, the light shined down on the pillar before revealing an immeasurably long sword of gold to descend down upon the pillar of ice!

And just like that, the sword stabbed the pillar from top all the way down to the bottom!

Chapter 438: Escape?

A hundred meters away, Ma Wu's entire body was awashed with golden light. Soulforce was circulating at tremendous speeds around his body in correspondence with his hand movements. With each hand seal, the soulforce mutated in flow, and with each second, his eyes focused in on the golden sword stabbing into the pillar of ice.

This was an attack only Ma Wu could activate. By accumulating the ambient elemental metal around his mid-heaven grade longsword, an even larger sword could be created.

Sheathing into the pillar of ice as if it was a scabbard, the sword pushed deeper into it, forming cracks all over the pillar as it dug deeper. With each crack that formulated in the pillar, a golden light started to shine from behind it before ultimately, the pillar started to crumble into large chunks.

It started from the top first. Each chunk of ice chipped away from the pillar revealed an even larger metallic glow from within while also slamming into the ground like an oversized hailstorm.

Liang Xiang and He Fan stood with bated breaths as they watched the chunks of ice fall away from the pillar. Likewise, Xing Yuan's fists were balled tightly by the side of his waist. This was a high-leveled fight he was watching, and the attacks done by the wind squaller and glacial roc had only been a prelude to Ma Wu's attack.

This was an attack that even a late-stage Soul King would find themselves troubled with, and to heighten the tensions even more, all four of the people there could distinctly sense that the Black Dragon King had been stuck in the ice pillar from beginning to end!

"Hah! Even if you're one of the Eight Soulbeast Rulers, I'd find it hard to believe that you'd escape unscratched from this! My Meteoric Demonsbane can pierce even the hide of a late-stage class

seven soulbeast, I'd like to see ho—" Pleased with the results of his attack, Ma Wu's lips were curled upwards into a smile to laugh and gloat.

Halfway through his gloating, however, the smile faded away from his face.

"Rooooarrrrr!!"

The primal roar of a dragon from the inner parts of the pillar interrupted Ma Wu, and further hastening the collapse of the pillar. Already, enough of the pillar was gone to show the tip of the giant golden sword, and coincidentally enough, that was the area where the roar was coming from.

Like an ominous cloud of fog, an aura filled with chaotic energy rolled through the area. Though not as palpable as actual fog, it somehow filled the area enough to obscure the eyesight of all.

However, Ma Wu and the others were still able to see that the giant golden sword hadn't yet pierced the ground. There was still a few scant meters between the tip of the sword and the ground, and a certain shadow in between the two!

It was the Black Dragon King!

Black miasma coiled around his body ominously, his feet pressed several inches into the ground. His right hand was hoisted above his head with some of that black miasma extending his arm length to grab onto the tip of the sword for him.

He had actually blocked this awe-inspiring attack!!

And aside from the ripped seams of his robe sleeves, not a single bit of his body was harmed!

"Impossible!!" Ma Wu's heart skipped a beat. To have the Black Dragon King completely unharmed came to him as a complete shocker, as Ma Wu had the utmost confidence that his move would've done a significant amount of damage!

Like Ma Wu, Liang Xiang and Lin Hefan were both bewildered, albeit on a slightly lesser scale. The two of them had been present in the battle with the Black Dragon King half a year ago, so they knew a little more about him than Ma Wu.

“Was that your strongest attack?” Still holding the golden sword above his head, the Black Dragon King scoffed at Ma Wu, “That wasn’t much!”

His right hand clenched upon the final word, signalling for the giant black claws of his hand to follow his gesture.

“Crack!”

From where the tip of the sword was, several cracks started to form from where the claws were touching! Extending through the blade like the webbing of a spiderweb, the cracks quickly overtook the majority of the blade before the entirety of it shattered into thousands of pieces!

“Boom!!!”

Two seconds had been all it took for the giant sword to completely and utterly disintegrate! Pieces of the giant sword crashed to the ground noisily, but a golden sword about a meter long came flying forth from the middle to return to Ma Wu.

The light in the sword was only half as bright as compared to its larger version, and Ma Wu was very surprised to see the sword in such a darkened state.

“I overestimated you all, you humans have no the right to stand in my way!” Exclaimed the Black Dragon King. He ascended back to the skies with a hateful glare at Ma Wu, though it seemed that the black miasma around his body was moving somewhat spasmodically.

It was only for a short second that this anomaly was noticeable for, but Ma Wu noticed it nonetheless.

“He’s hurt! He’s only pretending that he isn’t, attack! Attack!!”

He took off after the Black Dragon King, his sword unleashing a stream of energy from the tip to strike down the Black Dragon King first. Waving the sword again, another hundred rays of energy were sent in a horde formation to attack.

An ominous glint entered the Black Dragon King's eye. Dropping down towards Ma Wu, he roared, "Pretending?! Then allow me to inform you, you'll all be dying here today!"

The wind squaller and glacial roc came forward to greet him, bounding towards him with elemental energy bubbling around them for impact.

"Boom!"

"Boom!!"

"Boom!!!"

The series of explosions that happened next shook the earth, destroying the area that which had once been destroyed in a similar fashion half a year ago. Energy rolled through the area like a storm to tear apart the lands, creating ditches where once was plains, and craters where once was none.

Hundreds of blades made of wind flew past the area where Bai Yunfei was, gouging out the earth as it went past and even numbing his skin.

For ten minutes, the battle between the Black Dragon King and the others gave no small amount of excitement to Bai Yunfei—his blood was practically boiling with how excited he was.

This was truly a battle between the mighty!

All that could be seen of the Black Dragon King was a trail of black. If not for the wind squaller and glacial roc, Ma Wu would've been completely torn apart by the Black Dragon King. By himself, the Black Dragon King was still managing to hold one over the two soulbeasts and one man, though killing either of the three was still slightly beyond him.

Several times, did the Black Dragon King think of whether or not if he should run. With each thought, however, Liang Xiang and Lin Hefan were there to stop him. After their last encounter half a year ago, there were clearly some understandings about his character that the two learned about.

He couldn't even kill either of the two since they'd call their soulbeasts back to them whenever any chance of death was close.

Eyes shining with a contemplative light, the Black Dragon King's mind raced with ideas as he dodged yet another two of the wind blades sent in his direction. Several icicles pierced through his cloaky black miasma, but he managed to shrug off the damage to block a blade of energy from Ma Wu. Paying no mind to the blood sprinkling from his hand, the Black Dragon King then shot off into the opposing direction of Ma Wu!

He was flying towards the south!

The south, where Bai Yunfei was hiding!

Chapter 439: Gathering of Kings!

Another opportunity to attack was presented to the Black Dragon King, but before he could make good on that opportunity, a strange fluctuation in the air suddenly saw fit to him beating a hasty retreat! Simultaneously, his right hand blurred momentarily before a shield as black as a crow and as tall as a person appeared to hide his person.

In the entirety of the battle, this was the very first time he had taken out a weapon!

No sooner did the shield appear in front of him did two arrows the color of azure and violet appear out of nowhere and embed themselves into it!

“Boom!!!!”

Resonating loudly, the two arrows immediately exploded upon contact!

“Bang!”

There was a thud as the wind squaller dove into the dust cloud, knocking the Black Dragon King away!

He flew for almost an entire kilometer before coming to an eventual stop. As usual, his shield was still shining with a dim light, but the sound of something cracking alerted him to a problem with it.

A small palm-sized piece had fallen off the left edge of his shield!

He wiped at the corners of his mouth, realizing that he had been bleeding. “You!” he snarled towards an area of space above him.

Two figures—azure and violet in light—came stepping down from the skies. There was a male whose face was by no means average, and a female who was like a goddess in beauty.

But right now, both of their faces were twisted in fury, a fury

that fully expressed their desire to kill the Black Dragon King.

Like the Black Dragon King, Ma Wu paused to take a look at the newcomers.

“The Two Winged Kings!” He exclaimed.

These two figures were indeed Yi Gang and Yi Rou, the Two Winged Kings!

Right after Ma Wu cried out the names of the two, the area to their east began to warp in on itself, revealing yet another person; this time in white!

His arrival hadn’t gone unnoticed. Liang Xing was the first to realize who the mysterious person was. “The lord mayor of Praestia Pass, Wu Tianling!”

Wu Tianling was a man who held many titles. Lord mayor of Praestia Pass, warlord of the Northern Mist Province, a core member of the Tianhun School, member of the royal family, and a late-stage Soul King.

With their close proximity to the Soulbeast Forest, Praestia Pass had no shortages of trifles with class seven soulbeasts, but Wu Tianling had managed to kill any that dared to come near. At least ten of such soulbeasts had already met their ends by his hands, serving as a message to any of the more rational soulbeasts to stay away from this terrifying person.

Wu Tianling ventured into the Soulbeast Forest half a year ago to investigate the cause behind the soulbeast wave. Being the closest one to come to this part of the class six area, he came to realize that something powerful was residing here and decided to wait for the right time.

“What timely arrival you have, lord Wu. We’ve managed to finally hunt down the Black Dragon King, if you can please assist our efforts in capturing him, we can neutralize this scourge from our continent.” Liang Xing greeted the man courteously.

Not many late-stage Soul Kings existed on the continent, so it was imperative that he treat the man with the utmost humbleness, even if he was the second elder of the Beast Taming School. And with the Two Winged King, it was even more necessary that he act this way.

Wu Tianling levelled an evenly stare at Liang Xing first before looking to the rest of the group with him. “I came here today not so to help your Beast Taming School earn a new soulbeast puppet. By your school’s actions, the soulbeast wave caused tremendous damages to my Praestia Pass. As such, this matter will have a....different conclusion.”

He turned his eye next to the entrapped Black Dragon King. “As for you, Black Dragon King. For terrorizing the Tianhun Empire for the last hundred years, I will strike you down today!”

Liang Xing’s face hardened at Wu Tianling’s words. Wu Tianling was right. The soulbeast wave was caused precisely because of his group half a year ago. The chain reaction that was set off by their fight simply had consequences that none of them expected.

What Wu Tianling was planning to do today wasn’t to help them ‘capture’ the Black Dragon King, but to ‘kill’ him. Though, whether or not Wu Tianling wanted to kill the Black Dragon King for the sake of ‘the people’ or for his soulgem, Liang Xing wasn’t sure.

A late-stage class seven soulgem was precious after all, and there wasn’t a single soul cultivator that wouldn’t be tempted by one.

“Black Dragon King! We’ve hunted you for five years, and at last, we’ve found you! You....you won’t be leaving this place alive today!”

Completely uninterested in the dialogue between Wu Tianling and the Beast Taming School, Yi Gang snarled at the sight of the Black Dragon King.

The soulforce of the two jian were already raring to go, and if not for Liang Xing and the others, the two jian would've attacked the Black Dragon King a long time ago.

As such, this left the Black Dragon King in a very precarious situation. Liang Xing, Ma Wu, and the others were to his northwest, Wu Lingtian and his other newly-arrived companion Xia Zhengyan was to his east, and the Two Winged Kings were to his south.

All in all, this meant they were in a triangular position with him at the center.

The crease on the Black Dragon King's forehead grew even heavier. This development was an inconsistency to his plans. One or two new enemies was what he expected, but not four, or even the Two Winged Kings. Unlike the other humans who might've wanted him for 'other' reasons, all the Two Winged Kings wanted was for his life.

What they wanted was revenge for their dead son.

The two class seven jians he once killed and devoured were the son and daughter-in-law of the Two Winged Kings standing in front of him today.

It was a slip up of major proportions. Unlike other class seven soulbeasts, the Two Winged Kings were in a class of their own. The three of them were all mid-stage class seven soulbeasts, but the Black Dragon King was acutely aware that he had a very low chance of winning against them. Combined with the added presence of the others, the Black Dragon King was now fearful of dying to them today.

The Beast Taming School was perhaps the only party interested in keeping him alive, since Wu Tianling was most likely after him for the items he possessed.

If he wasn't careful, the Two Winged Kings would surely kill

him!

“Damn! Damn it all! Why was it them of all people to come over! And why not anybody else?!” Like his face was showing, the Black Dragon King was deeply disturbed by his current predicament. The plan where he could escape while everyone was fighting for him was practically out the window, and he was in a very dangerous situation.

There probably wouldn't be any other person coming from here on out. The Soulbeast Forest was a large one, and even though he had plenty of people after him, the people currently surrounding him right now would most likely be the only ones for a good while.

“What should I do? I'll die if I don't do something!” Desperation gripped at his mind as he tried his best to think of the best possible way to resolve this predicament.

No matter how hard he tried though, the three parties had his every possible escape route blocked. If he tried, he'd only be stopped by any two of the three. He'd need to fight his way out.

“I can only bet it on that! I hate to lose it here, but my life is more important! I can get it back later anyhow!”

Understanding that the Two Winged Kings were on the verge of attacking, he immediately withdrew a white object from his storage and held it in his hand.

“I know some of you are here for this item, if you want it so badly, then I'll give it to you!”

And with a loud roar, he tossed the item away from him!!

Chapter 440: Nephrite Throne

The object the Black Dragon King took out wasn't a weapon to be used against his enemies. Instead, it was used as a distraction by....throwing it to the west!

It had only remained in his hand for barely even a second before it was tossed, but the people gathered here had eyesight that could easily perceived the item as if it was completely still!

Before the object was too far gone, they all saw it--a tremendous-looking seat completely white in color!

At a glance, this three meter tall and two meter wide throne was sculpted entirely from pure-white jade. The armrests were sculpted to resemble dragons in shape, and the backrest of the throne had openwork done on it so that mysterious runic lines and stripes ran through the back very clearly. Rather than have four legs to stand upon, the bottom half of the throne was an entire slab of jade with even more runic script than the upper half. Even more mysteriously, the runic script emanated a soft glow of white that added to the illumination of the surrounding area by a tiny amount.

Despite that light, no elemental energy could be felt from it, making it seem more like a ordinary throne made from mutton-fat jade rather than something special.

But nonetheless, everyone who saw the throne immediately blanched at the sight.

“Could....could that be the rumored....” Lin Hefan gulped in anticipation, “the legendary Nephrite Throne!!”

The others didn't cry out in shock like he did, but their expressions were all the same.

Having the Black Dragon King's miasma protect the throne, the Black Dragon King was free to toss it with all his might. With his

throwing strength, the throne became merely a speck in the distance to everyone there!

“Correct! It’s the Nephrite Throne, one of the Ten Great Regalia! It’s yours to have, so if you want it, you’d better chase after it! There are many strong individuals here in the forest, if you take your time, someone else will take it before you!!”

With that shout, the Black Dragon King rushed off towards the north!

Because of his sudden action with the Nephrite Throne, Ma Wu, Liang Xing, and the others were all distracted by it enough to pay attention only to the throne and not his running. Of the entire group, Wu Tianling was the most prominent person to have greed show in his eyes, but there was also hesitation.

But all in all, the Black Dragon King’s quick actions allowed him to fully distract two of the three parties. The only group that hadn’t been swayed by the Nephrite Throne was....the Two Winged Kings!

True, they had been slightly surprised when the Black Dragon King took out the Nephrite Throne, but that wasn’t their true objective at hand. Looking away from the throne as soon as it was thrown, the two immediately gave chase to him!

Yi Gang was the first to move. Grunting, he shot forth like an arrow, violet light radiating from his back to become a pair of translucent violet wings.

As soon as they formed, the wings flapped in tandem with his movements, further accelerating his speed to the point where he was able to outstrip the Black Dragon King by a kilometer, blocking him from getting anywhere!

Surprise filled the Black Dragon King’s eyes. This was a first. He had never fought against either of the Two Winged Kings before, so he hadn’t the foggiest that either of the two could be capable of

such a speed!

And to add to his surprise even more, a multitude of violet feathers were fluttering down over his head!

At some point when Yi Gang overtook him, the feathers from his wings began to flutter down in surprising numbers. Each feather was only as thick as a tree leaf, but they were well over ten thousand of them!

Yi Rou's back had an identical pair of wings as Yi Gang, though her wings were colored in a greenish-blue rather than violet. But even more noticeably, feathers were molting from her wings to mix in with the ones from Yi Gang!

With several tens of thousands of feathers sprinkling the area, the Black Dragon King was deeply and truly without a path of escape. Not a single gap was to be had within this area!

“Featherfall!!”

As one, Yi Gang and Yi Rou glared at the Black Dragon King and pointed a finger at him!

“Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh....”

Moving with one another, the feathers shot towards the Black Dragon King with speeds that enabled them to be as fast as an arrow!

Bellowing in anger, the Black Dragon King took out his black shield once more and had it grow in size to protect his overhead!

“Boom!”

One after another, the Black Dragon King was assaulted by violet and azure colored feathers....

.....

Only five seconds had transpired when the Black Dragon King tried to make his escape to when the Two Winged Kings assaulted him. That was enough time for the other two parties to recompose

themselves and make a decision.

Within those five seconds, Ma Wu was the first to make a break for the Nephrite Throne. Thinking about it for a split-second, he turned back around, his eyes completely devoid of any greed, to continue chasing after the Black Dragon King again.

Like him, Liang Xing and Lin Hefan were also staring avariciously at the Nephrite Throne. Their heats pounded loudly with desire to chase after it, their minds thinking back to the legends surrounding the item. But when the Black Dragon King moved to flee, the two of them reshifted their focus to pay attention to him once more.

“Xing Yuan, bring back the Nephrite Throne no matter what!” Liang Xing spat to Xing Yuan before moving to join the fray.

Not expecting to have been called, it took Xing Yuan a moment to respond to him. But without hesitation, he immediately took off to the west!

Out of the entire group there, he was the only one that had bothered to go after the Nephrite Throne!

Like Ma Wu, Wu Lingtian’s eyes had sparkled when he saw the throne. He had in fact been the first to step towards it, but in the end, he stopped himself.

It wasn’t as though he didn’t want to go after the Nephrite Throne, but he had already planned on fighting the Black Dragon King.

The Black Dragon King was not allowed to leave this place alive, and Wu Lingtian had planned on dragging its corpse back to Praestia Pass to boot.

The Nephrite Throne was a must have item to everyone, but the amount of individuals here made it a little less enticing. It didn’t really matter to him if the Beast Taming School had it since he could just make a report to the Tianhun School, and with their

power, they'd be able to force the other school to hand over the throne as simple as that!

The Nephrite Throne, after all, belonged to the Imperial Family!

It was said that the founder of the empire, Wu Tianhun, once possessed this item two millenniums ago! To be even more specific, it was said that the Nephrite Throne was responsible for him having such a mindblowing talent for cultivation!

After his time, the item became a treasured heirloom passed down within the Imperial Family. But at some point within the last millenia, an extremely powerful wandering cultivator had taken the item and vanished into thin air.

From there, not a single trace was to be seen until the Black Dragon King descended upon the earth.

The Nephrite Throne was said to have an ability that any soul cultivator would froth at the mouth to have.

It could elevate the rate of cultivation by several magnitudes over!!

Once that got out, the Nephrite Throne soon became known to the entire world and ushered into the ranks as one of the Ten Great Regalia!

.....

From far away, Bai Yunfei watched the Nephrite Throne get thrown off into the distance. His eyes were shining brightly, though what he was thinking about was yet to be known.

He didn't know what the Nephrite Throne was, and neither did he even know about the 'Ten Great Regalia', but he could at the very least understand that the item was of great importance to everyone.

Furthermore, the Nephrite Throne had a mysterious aura that seemed to peak his interest in some way.....

Chapter 441: The Black Dragon King's True Form!

The feeling Bai Yunfei felt from the Nephrite Throne was slightly familiar to him. He couldn't explain the feeling, but he just couldn't put his finger on it....

He had of course, never seen the Nephrite Throne before, so it went without saying that this Nephrite Throne was a stranger to him. But the feeling of familiarity was there, albeit very weak. Such a sensation was vexing to say the least, and Bai Yunfei couldn't help but try to think of why this could be the case.

“Hold on! This feeling, it feels a bit like the....” The missing gear suddenly popped inside his head, “the Upgrade Stone?!”

The final piece of the puzzle was finally there for him to place. This feeling he was getting from the Nephrite Throne was extremely similar to the feeling from the Upgrade Stone! It wasn't an identical match, but the similarity between them was far greater than the differences!

Many a times, Bai Yunfei had tried his best to experiment and study the precious item that was known as the Upgrade Stone. He had been loathed to use the first one given to him by Hai Dongqing first and used it to study every so often whenever he was bored. For that reason, he was pretty familiar with what the stone felt like, and thus why he was able to sense the Upgrade Stone hidden away in the nest of the prisma oriole.

“So that thing is the Nephrite Throne, and a Great Regalia....” Bai Yunfei ruminated on what the Black Dragon King said to everyone. “I've never heard it before, but it has to pretty precious if the Black Dragon King had to throw it away like that. Everyone wants it, but unfortunately for him, the only one to go after it was Xing Yuan, who didn't even matter in the fight....”

Author Note: Regalia was once used as equipment tier, specifically for heaven tier soul armaments before I decided to revamp the equipment tier system. I hope no reader will misunderstand the situation and realize that Regalia now has a new meaning in this novel.

“Even I was able to tell how unique it was even after it was thrown. Clearly this throne is many times better than the Upgrade Stones I came across!!” Bai Yunfei’s eyes lit up with the utmost glee as he realized the significance of the item.

“Doesn’t this mean the ‘Nephrite Throne’ is made from....a lot of Upgrade Stones?!!”

His heart skipped a beat just thinking about that possibility, and the light in his eyes intensified in sharpness. Temporarily forgetting about the battle taking place, Bai Yunfei stared off towards the Nephrite Throne and the chasing figure of Xing Yuan with a great deal of uncertainty....

.....

The attack the Two Winged Kings announced onto the Black Dragon King, the ‘Featherfall’, had already plenty of feathers see to striking down at the shield of his, exploding with terrifying vigor whenever contact was had.

Just a single feather wasn’t very strong, but tens of thousands of them was a force to be reckoned with. With all of them exploding at once, the Black Dragon King was unable to move anywhere without being hit by one of them!

Each explosion forced the Black Dragon King down towards the ground, and the black shield of his having a small dent on its face. Though a different explosion would erupt with each feather touching it, the shield would still have a black light relight on its surface afterwards.

“Is this the strength of the Two Winged Kings? A soulbeast at the

limits of a late-stage class seven would be killed by such an attack, let alone a mid-stage class seven like they are!!”

The Two Winged Kings was a new opponent for him to fight, but already did their fighting prowess blow his expectations out from the waters. Just the Featherfall move alone was enough for him to feel completely convinced that they were many times stronger than the Azure Snake King he once fought before!

“And....why haven’t any of them run after the Nephrite Throne?!” His ire grew even stronger at that. It pained him so much to throw the item away, and yet not a single one of the Soul Kings went after it!

Xing Yuan was of no consequence to him, of course.

“Do they not care about the Nephrite Throne?!” he screamed mentally, “This can’t be! It’s a Regalia any being in the world would drool over! How are they not swayed by it?!”

He couldn’t accept this resolution. Throwing away the Nephrite Throne was something he didn’t want to do at all, and yet not a single person had taken the bait!

Several dozen years ago, he was stuck in a situation very much like this one. In order to escape with his life, the Black Dragon King had used the Nephrite Throne as bait.

Much to his glee, the people there took the bait and chased after it, allowing him to kill the ones that stayed behind and then kill the ones that went after the throne.

That way, he was able to make it out with his life and take back the Nephrite Throne.

That had also been his closest brush with death barring today.

As long as he could avoid it, the Black Dragon King didn’t want to resort to using the Nephrite Throne. It came under his possession several hundred years ago, and he was extremely fond of it.

But to come under fire like this today with people such as the Two Winged Kings and Wu Tianling gave him no other choice. They weren't many in numbers, but their strength made up for that.

Actually, the Black Dragon King had the feeling that there were several hidden foes lying in wait. It was only a feeling, or intuition, as he'd like to call it, but it was with this intuition that he was able to live for so long. That was another reason why he was so willing to throw away the Nephrite Throne!

True as it was that it was his most precious treasure, he had to be alive in order to even use it.

“Boom!!”

One explosion later, the Black Dragon King impacted against the ground!

“Grab him alive! If not, then at least get his soulgem and corpse!” Liang Xing cried out to Lin Hefan, the two moving in with their soulbeast puppets to attack.

Though things were going awry with the arrival of the Two Winged Kings, their chances of capturing the Black Dragon King alive became very slim. But even then, they had to try their best for the sake of the Beast Taming School to earn a profit somehow!

Pausing briefly for a moment, Ma Wu waved his golden sword to attack. Due to the injuries he sustained from the Black Dragon King in their fight before, Ma Wu was afraid to attack him from up close, so he choose to stay behind and wait for the best time to attack.

Standing in the air, Wu Lingtian had a grim expression on his face, though his soulforce was fluctuating in movement as he prepared himself to attack....

The attack of the Two Winged Kings was finally at its end, and no more dust was being kicked up from the ground now.

Fractured all over, the black shield in the Black Dragon King's hand managed to stop one more explosion before finally crumbling to pieces in his hand!

In the end, the low-heaven tier soul armament had been utterly destroyed by the Two Winged Kings!

As soon as the shield fell apart, the Black Dragon King immediately found himself besieged by the strongest attacks his opponents had to offer....

The Black Dragon King's body began to quiver all over. His eyes were bloodshot due to the stress of fighting for his life, and his heart was filled with hatred. He tilted his head up to look at the Two Winged Kings, the pupils of his eyes already given way to his berserk fury!

“Roarrrrrr!!!”

Extending his jaw wide open, an earth-shaking roar erupted from it along with a dense miasma of black light. It first enveloped his body in it before then spreading out to cover the surrounding area!

From ten meters, a hundred meters, three hundred meters, and then five hundred meters.....

The black miasma billowed outwards to eight hundred meters in the blink of an eye. A frightful aura manifested itself from within the miasma before it shot straight out into the skies!

Another dragon's roar was heard again, seemingly calling for the clouds above to darken in color ominously.

As the clouds grew darker and denser, droplets of rain began to fall before ultimately giving way to a downpour!

A figure nearly a kilometer long in length slowly descended down from the clouds. Scales as dark as the night adorned its body, giant claws capable of shredding the earth at its hands, and a tail a hundred meters long hung at the very end of the dragon-like body before it let loose another roar that shook the hearts of everyone

that heard it!

This was....the true form of the Black Dragon!

.....

At the same time of its appearance, Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up with opportunity, "Now!"

Flying straight out like a bullet from the canopy of the tree he was hiding in, Bai Yunfei made a beeline for the west without any hesitation to his step!

Chapter 442: Leaving the Battlefield (First)

A battle between beings of the Soul King level wasn't a battle Bai Yunfei could hope to take part of. With his current strength, a stray elemental 'grenade' from the fight would be enough to turn him into a bloody smear on the ground. He wanted to run away, but he was also worried that Xing Yuan would notice and try to kill him.

So Bai Yunfei decided to wait for when everyone was too busy on fighting while he continued to recover from his wounds.

By relying on the effects of his armor and the ambient energy around him, Bai Yunfei enjoyed a brief moment of accelerated recovery to a point where Bai Yunfei felt comfortable enough to try and make his escape.

It went without saying that this battle was wonderful to watch and invaluable to learn from, but the battlefield was getting bigger and bigger, and Bai Yunfei could not longer guarantee his own safety if he stayed. Leaving now rather than later would be a wise choice, especially now that the Two Winged Kings were here.

Bai Yunfei sensed from Xiao Qi that the Two Winged Kings knew that they were here, so them leaving shouldn't be a problem to the Two Winged Kings.

Furthermore, if the Two Winged Kings were so inclined to show their 'consideration' for them, all the Two Winged Kings had to do was exert some semblance of pressure onto Xing Yuan so that even if he realized Bai Yunfei was there, there'd be nothing to do besides being blown up by the two jian for being a bothersome 'ant'.

This line of thought was dashed when the Black Dragon King tossed away the Nephrite Throne, causing Xing Yuan to chase after it. To make his decision even harder to make, Bai Yunfei realizing what the Nephrite Throne gave rise to a third option....

In all fairness, this was an extremely auspicious opportunity! If everyone but Xing Yuan wasn't willing to leave, then Bai Yunfei had a chance to partake!

Every reward had its dangers, but Bai Yunfei was more than willing to risk it! The soulgem of a late-stage class seven soulbeast, revenge, or justification for the death of the many inhabitants of the continent wasn't something Bai Yunfei had the right to talk about. But if it was chasing after the 'unwanted' treasure, then Bai Yunfei had no problems in doing!

So, with every single new development taken into consideration, Bai Yunfei came to a decision. Once the Black Dragon King revealed its final form, he'd make use of the reveal to beat a hasty escape!

As soon as Bai Yunfei leapt out from his hiding spot, Xiao Qi followed suit. Transforming in size, Xiao Qi grew large enough to catch Bai Yunfei in its claws before taking off towards the west like a shooting star!

.....

Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi's sudden actions were noticed by each of the Soul Kings fighting, but not a single one of them cared. Only Liang Xing cared enough to give both of the two a slight glance, but when he realized how weak they were, he snorted and looked back to the fight at hand.

Yi Rou had looked at Xiao Qi with concern, but a warning from Yi Gang pulled her glance away from the bird. Pressing their hands together, Yi Gang and Yi Rou had an extremely long strand of elemental energy fly down onto the Black Dragon King like a hammer!

“Roarrrrr!!!”

Down below, the Black Dragon King snarled and took a step back. Though it was only a step, over a hundred meters of ground was

covered by that one step alone, and the ground trembled when his foot came smashing back down onto it, leaving a giant footprint in its place.

Opening his maw up wide, the Black Dragon King snapped at the bolt of energy!

“Bang!!”

There was a clang as his fangs met with the bolt of energy, but with the black miasma increasing the strength of his bite, the bolt of energy was ultimately broken into several pieces! As for the other half of the bolt still left intact, the Black Dragon King redirected it towards the glacial roc. Upon contact with the bolt, the glacial roc let loose a pain-filled screech.

Shifting its body slightly, the Black Dragon King lashed out with his tail to slam it into the three bolts of golden energy from Ma Wu. Pinging loudly with each bolt hit, he redirected the bolt towards the wind squaller a kilometer away!

A figure cloaked in golden light suddenly appeared right behind the Black Dragon King’s head at that moment, a giant blade ten meters tall and two meters wide in his hands and ready to give deliverance onto his head!

It was Wu Tianling!

.....

A few meters up in the air, Bai Yunfei was now riding on the back of Xiao Qi as they made their escape. Looking back just in time to see a series of explosions rock the earth, Bai Yunfei was pleased to see that no one looked like they’d be coming after him. Sighing in relief, Bai Yunfei wiped off the sweat from his forehead.

His hand reached down towards the Beast Taming Ring in Xiao Qi’s mouth. Touching at the empty ring, Bai Yunfei looked back towards the tree they left behind.

“Xiao Lan, this is where we’ll be saying goodbye. We can’t take

you with us from here on out....” He sighed, shaking his head in sadness.

The blue-eyes wyrm just had to go. It wasn't as though Xiao Qi couldn't carry the wyrm, but that Bai Yunfei needed the Beast Taming Ring back. And without the Beast Taming Ring to control the wyrm, there'd be no way that the wyrm would be willing enough to follow Bai Yunfei.

After traveling with the wyrm for so long, Bai Yunfei had a sense of attachment to it. The wyrm was a rather cool mount, but although it pained him to do so, Bai Yunfei had no other choice.

Back in the tree Xiao Qi flew out from, Xiao Lan stood on one of the tree branches, staring at the two companions it had previously traveled with. In its eyes, a humanistic-like look of contemplation could be seen. With how its eyes flashed strangely with light, a myriad of emotions could be seen with each flash of light.

Surprise, bewilderment, joy, and even a little bit of....reluctance....

It shook its head wildly before turning back to look at the awe-inspiring battle with the Black Dragon King. Shivering slightly at the sight, the blue-eyes wyrm then leapt down from the tree before making a careful, but quick beeline towards the south away from the area.

Since it was only an insignificant class six soulbeast, the people battling in the opposite direction wouldn't bat an eyelid at it....

.....

Rain was pouring down in heavy amounts, the skies being especially dark at the moment with lightning bolt crashing down from the skies. At this moment, Bai Yunfei sat on the top of Xiao Qi's back, his Cataclysmic Seal hovering in front of him with its barrier protecting him and Xiao Qi from the chilling gale and the rain.

They were traveling in the direction of where the Nephrite Throne was tossed, but not so far in that direction that they could be spotted by Xing Yuan. But with such a speed like that, Bai Yunfei was starting to feel uncertain if he'd be able to catch up in time....

“The Black Dragon King has a strong throwing arm. Even with all that elemental energy protecting it, he was able to throw it unbelievably far. I wonder just how far he threw it though....”

With his soulsense as his guide, Bai Yunfei made sure to think about what he thought about the Black Dragon King. “It would’ve been better to run a little earlier, but good thing there weren’t any other experts nearby, otherwise they would’ve joined the fight earlier. If they weren’t strong enough, then they would’ve been hidden far away like I was. If they were hidden far away though, the chances of me meeting them would’ve been pretty high if they’re going after the throne.”

“Xing Yuan....” Bai Yunfei looked up, “he has the advantage over me. But Xiao Qi is a lot faster than he is, so I should be able to catch up soon. Hopefully, he’ll have the Nephrite Throne in hand so I can take it from him.”

His first encounter with Xing Yuan had left him in a quandary where only escape was possible, but things were different now. Thanks to the elevation of strength he got with Xiao Qi, and the ‘tide-changing treasure’ he got, his chances of winning against Xing Yuan was even higher now!

“I could beat Xing Yuan, and even if someone else comes for it, I don’t really need the throne, so I can just leave after that.”

He nodded in satisfaction of his plan.

“Xiao Qi,” he affectionately patted Xiao Qi on the back of its neck, “you just need to fly straight, if we don’t, we’ll never find the treasure.”

“Chirp!!”

As if to reassure him, Xiao Qi chirped once before flapping its wings to fly even faster....

Chapter 443: The Tragedy of the Throne Seeker, the Convenience Man (Second)

In the later half of the class six area of the Soulbeast Forest.

“Aooooo!!”

The cries of a beast reverberated through the forest, but its cries were quickly cut short a moment later.

A man pulled his sword out from the throat of a recently killed leopard. From both the wound and the sword, blood dripped freely onto the ground.

The man plunged the sword again into the leopard’s head, excavating its soulgem into his hand.

“Man, I struck it rich today. Was going to leave, but then this late-stage class six soulbeast comes out of nowhere! What a convenient bounty!” He gloated to himself as he wiped the soulgem clean of blood before storing it away.

“Hehe, I really am just lucky. The others were killed by that late-stage class six delusion bear, but I had it in me to escape. Guess it’s true when they say fortune follows misfortune. With this late-stage class six soulgem, I won’t be going home empty-handed!”

This man is Bian Dangnan, a wandering cultivator that was actually in his fifties rather than in his thirties as his appearance might show. He was actually quite strong as a late-stage Soul Exalt and was a part of an adventuring team with two other late-stage Soul Exalts and three mid-stage Soul Exalts. Their group came into the forest to go hunting for soulbeasts, but a rampaging late-stage class six delusion bear had nearly decimated the team, leaving Bian Dangnan as the only survivor. In his rush to flee from the area, he came across a half-dead late-stage class six zombie leopard and ambushed it.

TL Note: This person’s name (卞当楠) is a homophone to 便当男

(Biandang Nan), meaning a ‘bento male’, or a male who is seemingly financially secure. Or in this case, convenient.

“Wonder what the leopard was so panicked about, though.” Bian Dangnan tilted his head quizzically.

“What’s that?”

A glow of white light off in the distance caught his eye. Realizing that something was flying overhead, he turned to look and see what it was.

“A chair?!” He was bewildered upon realizing what the flying object was, but then when he sensed the aura emanating from the chair, he smiled. “This....this is treasure! Time to get me another bountiful piece of treasure!!”

He leapt into the air, not willing to miss out on this opportunity. Orange light glowed underneath his feet with each leap he took, and in a matter of a few steps, he was high in the skies ready to grab hold of the throne.

He clapped his hands together with a grunt. Elemental earth started to gather in front of him, and when enough was gathered, it transformed into a wall of solid earth.

“Bang!!”

The throne collided with the wall, but rather than stopping like Bian Dangnan expected, the throne smashed straight through it!

Nearly watching the throne fly past him, Bian Dangnan hastened to grab onto it with his elemental earth now being used to strengthen his grip.

“Hngh!” He grunted, exerting all of the muscle and strength he had as a late-stage Soul Exalt to stop the Nephrite Throne from flying away.

But he was unsuccessful. The throne slipped away from his grasp and continued onwards to finally come crashing into the mountain

to his left a few hundred meters away.

“Elemental darkness!!” Bian Dangan was stunned, his eyes wide open in his disbelief. In the moment he tried to grab onto the throne, the elemental darkness still enveloping it had managed to soak into his body! It wasn’t a large amount enough to be fatal, but his arms went numb as soon as it made contact with the elemental darkness!

“Hmph!!” Expelling the elemental darkness with his soulforce, Bian Dangan’s entire person lit up in a fiery glow of orange.

The purge took a while before he could finally move again. With one last push, he drove out the last vestiges of the elemental darkness from his body!

“Whew....that was scary! It was just a little strand of elemental darkness, but that was too much for me!” Bian Dangan stretched his arms as he inspected his body all over. Upon seeing nothing was wrong, he immediately looked back to where the throne had gone.

“That’s definitely treasure!!” He shouted in joy, but before he could move, a terrifying aura from behind caused him to turn around in fear!

Right as he did, the large jaw of a bloody maw came forward to devour him!

“Roarr!”

All he heard was its roar before everything black for him. Pain wracked his entire body for a moment, and then, he felt nothing....

In one bite, the thunderfire wolf had clamped over the upper half of Bian Dangan’s body. Shaking its head, the thunderfire wolf split the man’s body in two, allowing the bottom half to fall back down from the skies.

The silhouette of a person came to a stop right next to his dead carcass. Stooping over, the figure collected the dead man’s space

ring and inspected its inner contents. “Pah! Just an overzealous weakling lusting after something as powerful as the Nephrite Throne....”

A vacant look that of a dead man was still on Bian Dangan’s face. His eyes were glossy, though still holding the expression of bewilderment in them--he had been unlucky, by using his soulforce to counteract the elemental darkness, his awareness had been temporarily softened. So when the thunderfire wolf came up to devour him, he stood no chance at all....

”But he was useful in slowing down the Nephrite Throne, else it fly even farther away for another person to take.” Xing Yuan murmured. Avarice filling his eyes as he stared at the throne, he moved to get closer to it to pick it up.

“So this is one of the Ten Great Regalia, the Nephrite Throne....”

He couldn’t help but stare hungrily at it for a while. He knew that even as an elder of the Beast Taming School, he wouldn’t live past a month if he tried to take the throne for himself....

“Eh? It won’t fit in the space ring?!” When he tried to store away the item, Xing Yuan was alarmed to find out that it wouldn’t go in!

“There’s another source of energy here, some type of soulforce imprinting!” It took a while for Xing Yuan to realize just how this imprinting came to be.

“The Black Dragon King! He turned the Nephrite Throne into a soulbound armament!”

With the exception of those from the Crafting School, soulbound armaments are rare to find from any soul cultivator beneath the rank of a Soul King. But for Soul Kings and those even stronger, soulbound armaments were a relatively easy thing to make. Any Soul King could simply imprint their soulforce onto the soul armament and bind it to them.

“In that case, I’ll have to wait for the second elder to take care of

it, or wait for them to kill the Black Dragon King. With his death, we should be able to take it, I should fir—”

A sudden source of soulforce caught his eye, interrupting his speech. Turning towards the east, Xing Yuan saw a flash of azure and violet come flying over to him!

“It’s.....” Xing Yuan realized who it was instantaneously, “it’s him!!”

Chapter 444: Battling Xing Yuan Again (Third)

Xiao Qi was blessed with many factors to give it a speed that'd outstrip that of a late-stage class six soulbeast. It had an affinity for both elemental wind and lightning, meaning that it was already naturally gifted with faster speed than most, and with the Wind and Lightning feathers, Xiao Qi was able to double its speed.

So in a very short amount of time, Xiao Qi was able to fly extended distances in a flurry of multi-colored light, and far away enough to have the rumbling thunder decrease in volume.

According to Bai Yunfei's own calculations, they've must've flown over a hundred kilometers by now.

"We're still not caught up....just how far did was the Nephrite Throne thrown for?! If this keeps up, the throne will be taken by someone else!"

A few seconds later, Bai Yunfei's eyes lit up with excitement, "This is....this is Xing Yuan's aura!"

Standing up on Xiao Qi's head, Bai Yunfei looked off towards the direction where he sensed Xing Yuan, "At last! He's stopped, does that mean the throne has stopped too?!"

That final line of thought gave no small amount of glee to Bai Yunfei. Preparing himself to fight, Bai Yunfei spurred Xiao Qi onwards.

Since he didn't know just how Xing Yuan would react to his arrival or if anyone else would be there, Bai Yunfei was careful in having them move carefully. They'd need to move in the most optimal way for an ambush, since rushing to their deaths would be completely counterproductive to their goals of grabbing the Nephrite Throne.

Killing a beast tamer wasn't anything bad, in Bai Yunfei's

opinion. And that was before his grudge with Xing Yuan could even be factored in.

Since Xiao Qi had no way of hiding its presence, Bai Yunfei chose to forgo hiding as well. He didn't even bother using the Face Change technique. Xing Yuan would know who he was when they fought, so the technique would be useless.

No one else was within the vicinity, meaning no one would know who Bai Yunfei was if he killed Xing Yuan.

“No matter the case, I should hurry up and finish up this battle before making my exit!”

The soulforce within Bai Yunfei's body was nearing its optimal levels for combat now.

Xing Yuan was ahead of him, standing ready for combat as well.

.....

It was with surprise that Xing Yuan realized who the newcomer was. His entire body immediately tensed up after he did, though.

“It's him!!”

While Xing Yuan was in the middle of his confusion, Bai Yunfei was already within a hundred meters of him. Stepping down from Xiao Qi, Bai Yunfei leapt down to the ground.

At first, he saw the corpse of Bian Dangnan. Then he looked to Xing Yuan's floating person in the skies, and then to the Nephrite Throne in his hands.

“It's you?!” Xing Yuan remarked, completely bewildered that Bai Yunfei of all people would be here.

“You're here of all places? As an...early-stage Soul Exalt? And with a soulbeast?”

But then he smirked, as if ridiculing Bai Yunfei, “A prisma oriole, though? Haha! Brat, where'd you find the balls to even appear in front of me again? Did you think you can beat me now now that

you're a little stronger? You ran away last time, but this time you're offering yourself up to me! Consider yourself unlucky that....your life will be forfeit here!"

Xing Yuan suffered plenty of humiliating feats by the hands of Bai Yunfei. Not only was his twinheaded vulture and seven dreamwind hawks killed, the three-eyed bloodlion he had been hoping to get was also slaughtered by Bai Yunfei!

And to make it even worse, Bai Yunfei managed to even injure Xing Yuan before successfully escaping.....

All of this combined made Xing Yuan absolutely furious with Bai Yunfei. So furious that Xing Yuan wanted nothing more than to tear him apart limb to limb if he ever saw him again.

From the other side, Bai Yunfei stared at him with a look of utter passivity. "You talk too much. I just want to say one thing to you, and it's the last thing you said to me before."

"You!!" He spat, holding his middle finger up, "Are going to die here today!!"

But the thunderfire wolf was already nearly upon Bai Yunfei and ready to clamp down on him! Xing Yuan had the Nephrite Throne pushed back to its cave as he prepared to take care of Bai Yunfei—with how precious the item was, he needed to be extra careful that nothing would happen to it while he fought, else he'd be in hot waters afterwards.

"This time, I'll be sure to take away all of this brat's soul armaments!" Xing Yuan decided. This time, he'd definitely kill off Bai Yunfei once in for all!

Rain was currently falling from the skies, but that didn't matter much to either Bai Yunfei or Xing Yuan since they were both fire-type soul cultivators. In fact, the rain was probably more beneficial to Xing Yuan, as he had the thunderfire wolf, whose affinity for lightning would come in handy here.

Xing Yuan smirked. He wouldn't even need to bother thinking about the early-stage class six soulbeast with Bai Yunfei.

So with the utmost speed, the thunderfire wolf's jaws were ready to clamp down onto Bai Yunfei! Thanks to the relative distance between them and the wolf, it hadn't been a problem for it to get close!

"Heh! I won't be the same as last time!" Bai Yunfei laughed. He was already in the middle of activating his 'coil' form when the thunderfire wolf was ready to strike, meaning he could activate it with some time to spare.

Now armed with the power of a middle-stage Soul Exalt, Bai Yunfei withdrew the Cataclysmic Seal, using its barrier to completely stop the wolf's fangs and claws from reaching his body!

Blocked from biting down on him, the thunderfire wolf immediately went for another tactic. Again opening its mouth wide open, a ball of violet light began to shine in it to prepare to fire!

Shifting his feet, Bai Yunfei traveled immediately to another destination by means of the Flash Step, resulting in the ball of light to sail harmlessly away from him.

Without any other move to follow it up, the thunderfire wolf could only try again the snap at Bai Yunfei with its jaws!

This time, Bai Yunfei didn't bother to dodge. Calmly waiting as the wolf approached, Bai Yunfei took a half step back with his right foot and extended both arms out.

They collided noisily, with Bai Yunfei being knocked several meters backwards due to the built up momentum. Rather than being bitten, both of Bai Yunfei's hands were expertly fastened to the jawbones of the wolf!

"Die!" What Bai Yunfei did was an extremely silly move, and Xing Yuan was all too happy to capitalize on it. Sending the

command, he had the thunderfire wolf gather up elemental lightning between its jaws again to fire it at point-blank range!

A fireball was simultaneously brewing in the hand of Xing Yuan a good dozen meters away.

Though beast tamers had soulbeasts to use as their main means of attack, they weren't completely helpless and had other ways to launch an offensive.

But rather than being intimidated by the ball of lightning forming in front of him, Bai Yunfei smirked. The blue bracelet on his right arm suddenly began to glow and grow in size. Loosening around his wrist, it slid down and over the wolf's head!

What he was doing wasn't an attempt to dodge the ball of light, but to clamp down the Beast Taming Ring over the wolf's throat like a collar!

As if a switch had been flicked, the ball of light immediately went out, and its body started to tremble!

Chapter 445: The Bane of the Beast Taming School (Fourth)

Bai Yunfei had racked up a good amount of experience with the Beast Taming Ring due to experimenting with the blue-eyes wyrm. The wolf was a different soulbeast, but still a soulbeast in the end. The ring snapped over the thunderfire wolf's neck and then tightened over it with a mysterious glow.

Earlier preparations had Bai Yunfei more than ready to protect himself with the Cataclysmic Seal while most of his concentration would be put towards to overwhelming the wolf's mind. To make his defense even more stalwart, Xiao Qi would distract Xing Yuan while Bai Yunfei was working on the wolf.

Beast tamers placed the most of their fighting capabilities on these soulbeast puppets. Soulbeast puppets fought at their most efficient and without the fear of death, making it a very powerful tool for beast tamers to wield.

On the inverse, this also meant that if the soulbeast puppet was taken out from the equation, the beast tamer would lose a drastic amount of firepower.

So what Bai Yunfei planned was to have the Beast Taming Ring overwhelm the mind of the thunderfire wolf. As long as Bai Yunfei could shut down the communication between the thunderfire wolf and Xing Yuan, then Xing Yuan wouldn't be able to use it. And when Xing Yuan is distracted, Xiao Qi would make its attack!

As expected from the Beast Taming Ring, Bai Yunfei could feel the energy from it activating start to happen.

But.

Something completely unexpected from what he thought would happen was starting to take place.

It wasn't as though it failed, but....

“Hmph!”

A half-surprised, half-hecktic choke was heard then. It was coming from Xing Yuan, a troubled expression on his face.

The fireball he had been preparing to use to attack Bai Yunfei with had dissipated into the air, as if it had fallen apart. But the elemental fire still floating around him was being distorted as his soulforce fluctuated spasmodically!

Meanwhile, the thunderfire wolf was trembling from head to tail, but....it wasn't doing anything else!

“Hold on....” This strange development caught Bai Yunfei off guard. As unexpected as it was, Bai Yunfei did notice something strange. Xing Yuan's face was completely contorted in on itself, and the elemental fire he had been radiating before was now going back into his body while his soulforce was trembling violently before compressing back into Xing Yuan's body!

And at the same time, Bai Yunfei felt another resurgence of a mental attack in his mindspace!

“I get it now!!”

The final piece of the puzzle clicked in his mind, it all made sense to Bai Yunfei now.

This contest between wills wasn't between him and the thunderfire wolf, but with Xing Yuan!

A smile of the utmost joy appeared on Bai Yunfei's face. As he concentrated at the task at hand, he cried out, “Xiao Qi!”

He hadn't needed to cry out like that, as Xiao Qi was more than ready when called. As soon as the Beast Taming Ring had been slipped onto the thunderfire wolf's neck, Xiao Qi had already lashed out with a blade of wind to attack Xing Yuan!

The pupils in Xing Yuan's eyes dilated as the blade of wind approached. He held his right hand up, a barrier of elemental fire

coating its palm, and allowed the blade of wind to smash into it.

Despite being relatively unharmed, Xing Yuan was knocked backwards several steps.

The true damage wasn't to his physical body, but towards his concentration. While Xing Yuan had to deal with that, Bai Yunfei managed to take the upper hand over him in the battle of wills!

The battle of wills was taking place not in Bai Yunfei's mindspace, but the thunderfire wolf's. Not even a single iota of resistance could be seen or felt from the wolf, and it seemed as though its mind was completely devoid of anything.

In this place, Xing Yuan was the master attacking Bai Yunfei, the gate crusher.

Furthermore, the main goal in this battle wasn't a battle of 'subjugation' like it was with the blue-eyes wyrm.

It was a battle of expulsion!

The mindspace of the thunderfire wolf was a battleground to Bai Yunfei and Xing Yuan. It belonged to neither person, but as long as one of the two sides remained, they'd hold control over it!

Right now, Xing Yuan was absolutely overwhelmed with shock. Someone wresting control of his soulbeast away from him was something he had never even heard of, let alone see before! The Beast Taming School made use of a method that imprinted a slave seal on the very depths of a soulbeast's soul. The seal allowed for the consciousness of the soulbeast to be erased while leaving behind its primal instincts for a soul cultivator to control with his own power, but controlling that power was already a very difficult task.

It took Xing Yuan an entire year for in order for him to force the thunderfire wolf into submission.

Once a soulbeast puppet was fully created, the seal on its mindspace was complete. Like a lock, the mindspace was safe from

external attacks, and even a Soul King would be unable to force himself into it, since that'd lead to the soulbeast's death if anyone tried!

Never had Xing Yuan ever heard before of a soul cultivator trying to wrestle away control of a soulbeast puppet from its beast tamer!

Coming in to strike Xing Yuan, Xiao Qi came descending down onto him like a bolt of violet lightning from the skies, forcing the man to break concentration and dive to the side again.

Without his equipment, Bai Yunfei was only a mid-stage Soul Exalt, but with them, he was comparable to the levels of a late-stage Soul Exalt. Compared to someone who stood at the very apex of the late-stage Soul Exalt level like Xing Yuan, Bai Yunfei's mental strength would be weaker. It was only due to Xiao Qi's interference and Bai Yunfei's surprise attack that he was able to get the upper hand, but in the end, it was enough to push Xing Yuan back in the battle of will!

"What's going on here! What in the world is going on?!" Xing Yuan mentally screamed to himself. He couldn't believe what was going on, and neither could he understand it. But all he knew was that the Bai Yunfei fighting him today was completely different to the one from the first battle!

He had already moved back several kilometers so that he could dodge Xiao Qi's movements, but each time he tried to widen the distance, Xiao Qi would chase after him and unleash hundreds arcs of lightning!

"Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang...."

Each arc of lightning struck uselessly off the coating of elemental energy around Xing Yuan's body. Though they didn't seem to do much against it, each lightning bolt was slightly stronger than the last, making the elemental fire around him flicker as if threatening to collapse.

“Boom!!”

At last, the barrier could hold out no more. It shivered for a bit before finally collapsing in on itself and leaving Xing Yuan defenseless.

And before he could put up another barrier, a dozen more bolts of lightning struck him

“Hmph!” A droplet of blood escaped from Xing Yuan’s mouth. As a late-stage Soul Exalt, he could handle at least this much physical pain. Since he had elemental fire coursing through his body, the elemental lightning from the bolts wouldn’t hinder his body much in any lasting way.

But....

“Urk!?” A gurgle of confusion also escaped from his mouth then. In that moment of contact with the lightning bolts, he felt a strange sliver of energy escape from the bolts of lightning into his body, moving past his soulforce and elemental fire to target his inner body. From his skin to his very soul at his center, the strange energy seemed to penetrate straight through it, and then....

He had been in the middle of retreating when the lightning bolts struck. And when that strange energy from the attack pierced into his body, Xing Yuan came to a sudden stop. Disobeying Xing Yuan’s commands, his own hand came up with a ball of fire in it. Tossing it away, they then began to move strangely along with his feet, much to Xing Yuan’s confusion and horror.

He was struck with confusion!

“Chirp!!”

And this was precisely the moment Xiao Qi was waiting for!

Extending its wings out wide, three separate blades made from a void in space formed in front of it. As soon as they reached their full size, each of the three then shot silently towards the direction of Xing Yuan!

Like Bai Yunfei, Xiao Qi had a few understandings of its own when it came to its own strength.

Use swarming tactics to have the enemy afflicted with a confusion status, and then use the Spatial Edge to follow up.

This battle plan was its most effective and most useful tactic with very little room for error.

And this time was no exception.

“Whoosh!”

One of the Spatial Edges came into contact with the waist of Xing Yuan with a sound barely audible to the listening ear.

It continued into the forest below where it then disappeared from sight.

And as for Xing Yuan, his entire person came to a sudden and immediate stop....

He had been bisected!!

Chapter 446: An Attack onto the Soul and the Ninth Heaven Shaking Dragon's Roar! (Fifth)

The moment when the Spatial Edge tore into Xing Yuan's waist, Bai Yunfei felt the opposing source of resistance in the thunderfire wolf's mindspace slip away and out of existence.

Fresh blood sprayed all over from both segments of Xing Yuan's body, leaving Bai Yunfei to stare at it in mute surprise.

"That...was easy??"

It wasn't until Xing Yuan's corpse fell to the floor did Bai Yunfei finally fully realize that the battle was over. Staring oddly at the corpse below, Bai Yunfei looked then to the thunderfire wolf, not sure of what to think or say.

His first battle with Xing Yuan forced Bai Yunfei into such dire straits where escape was the only path left for him to take.

But this time, it didn't even take one full minute to completely devastate the man.

This outcome was entirely beyond his expectations and his victory far too seamless for him to be convinced.

"Chirp!!"

Hearing the excited chirps of Xiao Qi, Bai Yunfei turned his head to face the bird. Lights four different colors were surrounding the bird, as if gathered to it with an increasingly mystique energy to them.

"Xiao Qi can get stronger this way too?!" Bai Yunfei thought. He was quite happy about this, actually. Xiao Qi's ability to grow stronger with each kill had always been a treat to see, but Bai Yunfei hadn't expected to see the skill activate again with the death of Xing Yuan.

This phenomena would need to be investigated, Bai Yunfei thought, but now wasn't the right time for it; there was the Nephrite Throne to be considered. Stepping towards it with a racing heart, Bai Yunfei knew that his guess was right:

There was a connection between the Upgrade Stones and the Nephrite Throne!

At a glance, the Nephrite Throne looked quite heavy, but the reality was nothing like Bai Yunfei imagined. At most, the throne was fifty kilograms, which wasn't a weight Bai Yunfei couldn't lift.

But the moment his hand touched the throne, a string of notifications rose up into his mind, leaving him speechless as he realized what the notifications was saying....

.....

“Roar!!!!”

A single roar echoed through the skies, emitting a strange energy that doubled as a type of forcefield. From where there used to be rain, not a single droplet of it could be seen for a kilometer in radius!

At the center of it all was the Black Dragon King, who towered over everyone else with an aura of extreme intimidation. All over his body, scars and wounds decorated his once-shiny scales, and rivulets of blood dripped from the unprotected areas. Some areas were far more bloody than the others, and his giant tail had even been reduced by a good twenty meters!!

He also looked far more furious than before, his claws swiping and the still-remaining portion of his tail thrashing in an attempt to fend off his foes.

The glacial roc was still flying within attacking range of him, though the feathers to its left wing was for the most part gone. It was using ice as a way to hold the ten-meter wide wound on its belly together, but its mangled flesh was still a nasty sight to

behold.

Also not too far away from the roc was Liang Xing. Dried blood hung at the corners of his lips as he stared unflinchingly at the Black Dragon King. Despite his relative health to the Black Dragon King, his glacial roc wasn't in a shape where he could use it to freely attack like before.

On the ground by his side was the wind squaller. Unlike the glacial roc, who was in fighting condition still, the wind squaller had an eerily large depression on the left side of its belly, with several of its rib bones sticking out. It laid weakly on the ground, and if not for the weak breathes it gave out every so often, it'd look more dead than alive. Similarly, a very pale-faced Lin Hefan sat right by its side with his hands on the soulbeast to try and aid it in its recovery.

In relatively decent condition compared to the others, Ma Wu still stood there on the battlefield with his golden sword still held tightly in his right hand. It was speckled with blood, though it was mainly his blood rather than the Black Dragon King's! There were claw marks running all over his arms so that rivulets of blood would drip from them onto the sword, but the most eye-catching detail was the miasma of black aura coiling around it. Another type of energy was seemingly combatting it, and it seemed as though if he couldn't deal with this black miasma, his wounds wouldn't begin to heal.

These three men were on temporary retreat from the battlefield, leaving only the Two Winged Kings and Wu Tianling fighting the Black Dragon King.

With his golden greatsword in his hand, Wu Lingtian was a powerful figure to behold on the battlefield. Each swing of his greatsword sent a blade of golden energy towards the Black Dragon King, and more often than not dealing another injury to the Black Dragon King.

In this way, Wu Lingtian had contributed to over half of the wounds inflicted on the Black Dragon King's body.

The Two Winged Kings remained in the skies, though their figures were never stationary. Flitting this way and that, their two persons attacked at the Black Dragon King without ever giving him any time to breath.

Yet, it seemed as though they were waiting for something....

The Black Dragon King on the other hand, seemed to fighting woefully at sub-optimal strength than he desired.

Over an hour had already gone by since the battle had gone by without a clear victor to be seen. Then at last, one lunar-shaped energy blade from Wu Lingtian cut deeply into the Black Dragon King's back despite the scales being strong enough to withstand even an earth-tier soul armament, eliciting a painful scream from the Black Dragon King....

“Now!”

Realizing an opportunity to strike, Yi Gang called out from his position a kilometer above to Yi Rou. Together, the two connected with each other through a mental link of theirs, their right index fingers pointing at the Black Dragon King like their eyes were!

Not even a wisp of elemental energy was coming off from their fingers, but the soulforce within their bodies were very clearly fluctuating wildly before leaving their body in some sort of formless attack.

Simultaneously, the Black Dragon King suddenly roared aloud in fury, despite not being visibly attacked!

An attack onto the soul!!

This was the strongest type of attack a Soul King could employ!

Soul cultivators were generally categorized into three divisions:

Soul Apprentices, Personages, and Warriors are capable only of

using their soulforce to strengthen their bodies to battle.

Soul Spirits, Ancestors, and Exalts are capable of manipulating the elements in the world as one of their primary offensive methods.

But those who are fortunate enough to become Soul Kings are blessed with the true meaning behind what it means for a soul cultivator to ‘cultivate the soul’: the ability to manipulate the soul!

Not only are they capable of manipulating their own souls, but the souls of another!

And for that reason, the world of soul cultivators had a saying—

All soul cultivators beneath the Soul Kings are but only ants!

As long as one became a Soul King could they turn their nose up to the rest of the populace as a being of strength! Anyone weaker than a Soul King wouldn’t even have the time to attack one before having their soul extinguished!

The greatest benefit a Soul King enjoyed over all else was their ability to directly attack the soul!

Some Soul Kings would only need eye contact to reduce a weaker being into a soulless husk!

In the wide world that was this one, there are a few special soul cultivators or soulbeasts that could employ attacks that attacked the soul. Compared to Soul Kings, however, they were nothing more but children pretending to experts in front of adults! What little strength behind their attacks was generally considered to be an attack on the mind rather than the soul, and it was generally child’s play for a Soul King to replicate.

And when they did, their attacks was always on a completely higher level.

None of the Soul Kings bothered to use these type of attacks before since it was always a battle of life or death between attacker

and defender. Whomever lost was always the one who died as a result! As for the one who won....they'd have the chance to 'devour' the soul of the other!

Through this method, they could enhance their own strength!

Thus, the Two Winged King had been waiting for the best time to use this type of attack.

Simultaneously, the other Soul Kings realized what was going on and hastily moved to attack the Black Dragon King's soul as well!

The Black Dragon King's death was written in stone now, all that was left to do was fight for supremacy over his soul!

This was what everyone was thinking.

Obviously, the Black Dragon King was the target of everyone's attacks, but like everyone else, he too had been waiting for this moment!

At the very moment he felt the Two Winged Kings try to attack his soul, his crimson-red eyes flashed maliciously with opportunity!

“Rooooarrrrrr!!!!”

His head facing the heavens, the Black Dragon King unleashed yet another primalistic roar; this one far louder than any other roar before. All of the black miasma inside and around his body left him to ascend into the skies, bringing with it a powerful force of aura....

This was the strongest technique the Black Dragon King had available to it, the Ninth Heaven Shaking Dragon's Roar!

Chapter 447: High-Heaven Tier!

The Ninth Heaven Shaking Dragon's Roar was the name the Black Dragon King gave to his strongest move.

With this move, he was able to escape from many situations where death was all but certain for him.

Not only was this a soul attack, it attacked the souls of multiple people at once!

At the same time of his casting, the other Soul Kings blanched as if they had been struck by an invisible wall of some sort.

Not a single one of them believed that the Black Dragon King—who looked like he was at the end of his rope—could launch a soul attack as powerful as this.

Their souls trembled violently from the center of their bodies, and it felt as though something was trying to wrestle their souls out from their bodies.

But!

It wasn't an illusion as they wanted to believe!

The Black Dragon King was very clearly using a move that was trying its utmost best to tear their souls out from their very bodies!

The weakest of the group, Lin Hefan, was the first to succumb to the Black Dragon King's attack. Since he had been busy with trying to attack the Black Dragon King's soul, the dragon's roar left him defenseless. Turning pale with pain, the man's body began to shimmer slightly at the edges before a transparent silhouette began to inch out from his body towards the direction of the Black Dragon King!

This silhouette looked exactly like Lin Hefan for one simple reason....it was his soul!

Soul cultivators relied on their physical body to encapsulate the

soul. Should the soul leave the body, then even a Soul King would succumb to death without a doubt!!

The half of Lin Hefan's soul outside his body was seemingly struggling to sink back into its master's body, but it was fighting a losing battle! The half that was already out was already looking like it was being torn apart!

Both of the Two Winged Kings were pale in the face, but neither of the two were particularly panicked about this attack. Rather, their eyes were shining furiously with burning hatred to kill the Black Dragon King.

As strong as this move was, the Black Dragon King was still in very dire straits. The combined soul attacks from everyone else was wearing away his own soul, and his Ninth Heaven Shaking Dragon's Roar hadn't helped his soul much. Right now, his soul was like a candle. The Ninth Heaven Shaking Dragon's Roar helped it burn twice as hot, but at the cost of making it burn out even faster. With so many people attacking his soul, he'd be very hard-pressed to survive.

Even if he managed to devour Lin Hefan's soul within the next two seconds, it wouldn't do much for him.

So he only had one desire.

Live!

He had to live!

And to do that, he had to run!

“Roar!!”

Issuing another deafening roar, the Black Dragon King kicked off the ground with its mighty hind legs. A crater kilometers wide in radius formed from where his legs dug into the earth, but the push allowed for his body to go flying off towards the north-east like a bullet. As he flew, black miasma began to rise up from his body as he tried to revert to his human form.

No matter what happened, he wouldn't go out without a fight!

Countless kilometers of distance was traveled before his body started to shrink, but in the final moment before his transformation was complete, an azure shooting star suddenly and without warning shot out from a distorted piece of the skies and through his left side!

.....

Going a few moments back to where Bai Yunfei was in the west...

Unique Equipment
Equipment Grade: High Heaven
Elemental Affinity: None
Equipment Effect 1: 200% increase in the rate of cultivation.
Equipment Effect 2: 200% increase in the rate of recovery.
Equipment Effect 3: Allow the successful upgrade of any equipment +14 and below once.
Equipment Effect 4: Increase the tier of an equipment when crafting by one (High Heaven tier being the highest).
Cannot be upgraded

This was the notification Bai Yunfei got when he touched the Nephrite Throne.

In other words, these were the stats of the Nephrite Throne....

Bai Yunfei's entire person went still; his body as wooden as a statue as his mind processed this.

“You’re....you’re f*cking with me!!” For two whole seconds, not a single coherent word other than an expletive left his mouth. “What....what kind of stats are these?! Can this even exist? It’s outrageous!”

It was little wonder why Bai Yunfei was so worked up. The stats of the Nephrite Throne would stun any person.

“High heaven tier....high heaven tier!!”

Breathless with excitement and shock, Bai Yunfei tried his best to calm his wildly-beating heart. “So this is what one of the Ten Great Regalias should be like? It’s crazy what stats it has.” He muttered, his hand still on the throne.

“A 200% increase in cultivation, this means I get three times the benefits of what I’d normally have!” Bai Yunfei’s mouth twitched excitedly, his head feeling almost faint with giddiness.

What did this mean? It meant what normally would take thirty years to accomplish would only require ten years with the Nephrite Throne!

“Compared to this, my Cultivation Pendant is practically trash!!” Bai Yunfei sighed, “And the second equipment effect makes my Recovery Soul Armor equally trash.

“With this Regalia, is that why the Black Dragon King is so strong?

“The first two effects is already enough to make this a Regalia in the eyes of others, but for me....” Bai Yunfei’s eyes glistened excitedly, “it’s the third effect that makes it absolutely outrageous!!

“A guaranteed chance to upgrade a +14 item, I didn’t even know there could be such an effect like this! That’s really similar to how the Upgrade Stone works, but it’s way better!! +14....”

Only one +14 equipment existed in his possessions, or well, had existed; the egg Xiao Qi hatched from, but he didn’t even get the chance to see the full stats of the egg. If he had a guess though, that +14 additional effect was extremely powerful despite the egg being only a mid-human tier.

On the topic of +14, Bai Yunfei’s next thought was about the Cataclysmic Seal. If he could turn that into a +14 soul armament....

He shivered at the thought. The prospect of that was simply a little too exciting.

There was still the fourth additional effect to this throne, but Bai Yunfei was more interested in the third one still.

“But what if I can only use the third additional effect just once like the Upgrade Stones? Would the Nephrite Throne be turned into the soul armament?” Several questions arose in his mind, “Wouldn’t it become a one-use item then? If I use it, would it be like the Upgrade Stone and disappear?!”

The allure of having a +14 item be upgradeable was far too tempting, but the first and second effects were also very hard to part with. Like any other soul cultivator, Bai Yunfei wasn’t too willing to give up an enhanced rate of cultivation for the sake of upgrading his Cataclysmic Seal.

“It’s not a hundred percent certain that it’ll be like the Upgrade Stone....maybe it’ll just lose the effect after one use?” Bai Yunfei hoped. Right now, he was hoping that the Nephrite Throne would remain the same after it was used to upgrade an item, but that it’d lose the third effect.

“In the end, I’ll have to make sure of this later, but not right now. I need to get out of here first.”

With that thought, Bai Yunfei looked back to Xiao Qi. Only a few dozen seconds had transpired since the bird went into that state, so it shouldn’t be long before it was over.

“Eh?”

Bai Yunfei was surprised to see his Violet Soul Ring light up when attempting to store the Nephrite Throne away, but then not see the throne get stored in it.

“It can’t be stored this way?!”

“I can feel the imprint of someone’s soulforce, this must be....the Black Dragon King.” He took a closer look at it.

“His soulforce must be preventing me from storing it away. That means if he escapes, he’ll be coming to this area and take back the

throne, crap!

“What?!” Just then, another sensation hit him, “The imprint...is gone?!”

Just one moment after he had realized the imprint was there, the imprint vanished literally a second afterwards!

“Is....is the Black Dragon King dead?!” That was all Bai Yunfei could think of.

One of the Eight Soulbeast Rulers, the mighty Black Dragon King, dead!

Whilst his mind was processing this information, a black demonlike shadow came suddenly from the other side of the mountain. Black aura swirling around its right fist, the shadow lashed out to punch at Bai Yunfei’s head!

Chapter 448: Death of the Black Dragon!

Mustering up the last of its strength, the Black Dragon King tried his best to unleash another Ninth Heaven Shaking Dragon's Roar. And with the arrow still stuck in his body, he made one final attempt to flee towards the northeast.

The Two Winged Kings followed swiftly after him. Yi Rou turned her body to face Yi Gang, their hands linking together to form a loop between them. Still staring hard at the Black Dragon King, the two of them opened their mouths and screamed!

“Chirrrppp!!!”

The warbling that came out from their mouths could only be described as being extremely strange. It wasn't loud, but the sound was piercing to the ears.

But even more importantly, those who were still suffering under the effects of the Ninth Heaven Shaking Dragon's Roar immediately realized what kind of attack this was!

“Tremolo of the Jian!”

On the edge of chasing after the Black Dragon King himself, Wu Tianling knew what this attack was himself. Feeling as his soul was already starting to tremble in his body, Wu Tianling quickly moved to meld his soulforce together to act as a safeguard against this attack!

It was a soul attack!

The attack that the Two Winged Kings were using was a soul attack that wasn't any weaker than the Black Dragon King's Ninth Heaven Shaking Dragon's Roar!

Thankfully, there was only a slight fluctuations in his and the other human's souls. This attack wasn't aimed at them, but the Black Dragon King....

“Roarrrr!!!”

Another terrifying roar erupted from the Black Dragon King, but fear was already permeating into it this time. His entire body was shaking, and the black mist around it was churling violently before....a shadow rose out from his person!

The Black Dragon's soul!

It looked unstable, just like the Black Dragon King himself. Whenever he roared, the soul writhed as if suffering from a pain unlike anything other.

And then, at last.....it went still!

The roar that was coming out from the dragon's mouth came to a stop as soon as its soul went still. What was left of the dragon's furious desperation bled away from his eyes, leaving behind only a tiny sliver of light to flicker in them before that too, had disappeared....

In the mere moments before the Black Dragon King was truly dead, a rip in space opened up within the vicinity. Expanding until it took on the form of a door, the rip then released a bolt of shining azure light from within!

The very last of the Black Dragon King's soul was on the verge of being drawn from his body due to the Two Winged King's attack, but before it could fully separate itself from the body, the bolt of azure light shot for the Black Dragon King's head with a chilling cry!

The cry was unnatural sounding. Unnatural in the fact that it sounded not like the sound of any known living being, and not like the sound of any natural occurring piece of wind. In fact, it sounded more like the woeful cries of an unknown being!

“The Mourning Winds!” Ma Wu was the first to realize what this was, his eyes narrowing in his shock, “Yun Liantian!”

An ecstatic laugh cried out from within the ray of azure light.

“Haha!!” It responded, “Just in time! The soulgem of the Black Dragon King is mine to claim!!”

Coming to a stop just a brief ten meters away from the Black Dragon King’s head, the light petered away, revealing the figure of Yun Liantian standing on top of his One Azure Leaf Boat. In his right hand was a sword completely enveloped in an azure light.

Yun Liantian had a very eerie light in his eyes, making him seem more deranged than sane as he swung his sword at the Black Dragon King!

Windbreaking Edge!

It was a casual swing of the sword, but the series of lights that came out from the sword was exceedingly sharp and fast! Zooming out from his blade, the lights struck into the Black Dragon King’s throat without resistance!

Without at all stopping in his movements, Yun Liantian finished the decapitation of the Black Dragon King before withdrawing from the scene!

A bubble of azure light enveloped the dragon’s head briefly as it floated in the air. His sword was the first to go into his ring, and then the dragon’s head disappeared with it.

And where the Black Dragon King’s body was, blood was pouring out from his exposed neck!

Yun Liantian was already gone though. Before the first droplets of the Black Dragon King’s blood could get on him, Yun Liantian had already ripped open the space in front of him before he stepped inside. It closed after him with a blink of azure light, and then the space where he once was returned back to normal....

.....

From start to finish, Yun Liantian hadn’t even been there for five whole seconds!

The other Soul Kings were all stunned. The abruptness of the Mourning Winds had forced them all to reinforce their souls, but now that the attack was over, all they could do was stand and watch the decapitated corpse of the Black Dragon King fall down to the ground!

Yun Liantian's appearance, positioning, and cadence in his movements had all been spotless. Perfect in timing and flawless in execution, he had been as smooth as water itself!

The winds he used to hide, move, and attack was a soul skill Yun Liantian was highly known for. It was so known that it went by another name....the Stormful Swoop!

"Yun Liantian....how despicable!!" Liang Xing spat. Anger flooded his body so heavily that it shook all over, but before he could move to take the rest of the dragon's body, Wu Tianling had already beaten him to it.

Down on the ground, the man had already sucked the corpse into his ring before moving to run away!

Liang Xing's face hardened again in consternation. He looked off towards the distance where Yun Liantian was but only a speck in the horizon, "After him!" he spat.

Between the corpse held by Wu Tianling and the soulgem held by Yun Liantian, the soulgem was more important to them!

He leapt on top of the glacial roc, waiting only for a moment to let Lin Hefan meet him there with his wind squaller before the glacial roc took off. And in less than a second, the glacial roc disappeared in a flash of white light.

Ma Wu was a little more hesitant himself. But after a second to contemplate his plans, he too, took after Yun Liantian with nothing but a snarl.

High in the skies, the Two Winged Kings stood still. They had been one of the first to regain aware of their surroundings after

Yun Liantian left, but they didn't move even a finger after him. All Yi Rou did was watch when the Black Dragon King's body fell and was taken away by Wu Tianling with an expression of fatigue and pain before she leaned onto Yi Gang's shoulder. "Is...is the Black Dragon King dead?"

Yi Gang took her hands into his, a mixture of emotions swirling about on his face. "Yes," he nodded nonetheless, "he's dead."

Yi Rou took a moment to respond to him, "Then let us return...."

"Yes."

Without another word, the two disappeared in a flash of light to return to the depths of the forest.

The only person left in the area was Wu Tianling, who watched as everyone left the area. He looked around himself then to see if anything was amiss before flying off towards the south to leave the forest.

In no time at all, a stifling silence descended upon this area. Where battle once reigned without pause, only the depressing pitter-patter of raindrops could be heard along with the slowly-dispersing rain clouds.

"Shaa.....shaaaa....."

An indeterminate amount of time later, a rustling sound from the edge of the battlefield made itself known, a small figure appearing just for a moment before slinking away from the area as well....

Chapter 449: Destruction of the Throne!

In the moment the Black Dragon King died, the imprint of his soul within the Nephrite Throne began to fade away out of existence, much to Bai Yunfei's shock.

But at the same time, a figure from the shadows lashed out with a mighty punch onto the back of his head!

Bai Yunfei's guard was understandably lessened since Xing Yuan was dead. Even the barrier put into place by the Cataclysmic Seal was gone since Bai Yunfei didn't sense any other dangers to be on guard for. The amazing stats that the Nephrite Throne had and the death of the Black Dragon King made him even more surprised, leaving this mysterious assailant an opening to capitalize on!

“Chirp!!”

A warning trill from Xiao Qi immediately snapped Bai Yunfei back to awareness. Hair rising up in realization of the danger he was in, Bai Yunfei whirled around just in time to block the punch with his right arm.

This move was Bai Yunfei's go-to sequence of defense. The Flameblade Bracer on his right arm usually gave him more protection than anything else, so the chances of him being harmed was usually pretty low. It'd also give him enough time to back away and use the Cataclysmic Seal for any additional defense if he needed it, thus giving him even more time to ready himself for combat.

But as things were right now, Bai Yunfei forgot about one extremely crucial thing.

When he turned around, he was still holding onto something in his right hand, the Nephrite Throne!

So when he turned around to block, it was the Nephrite Throne that took the impact rather than the Flameblade Bracer!

It was by far too late when Bai Yunfei realized this mistake, and it was too late for his assailant to pull his punch back.

In other words, what his assailant punched was the Nephrite Throne!

“Boom!!!!”

Right in front of his very eyes, the Nephrite Throne....crumbled into pieces!!

The Nephrite Throne was one of the Ten Great Regalia, but by no means was it a defensive piece of armor. The jade that made up the throne was mysterious and enigmatic in the eyes of humanity, but no one had ever used it to stop the attack of another in its long history.

And who would ever think to use it in such a manner?

The Black Dragon King infused some of its energy into the Nephrite Throne when he threw it. Because of that black aura, the throne was safe from harm when it imprinted itself into the mountain, but now that the aura was gone, and the soulforce of the Black Dragon King nowhere to be seen or used, the Nephrite Throne was in an extremely fragile state.

Naturally, the Nephrite Throne wasn't an object that would crumble at even the slightest of touches. It was a soul armament strong enough to withstand even the slashes of any normal blade without a scratch, but—!

The punch of a late-stage Soul Exalt with all his might behind it was a different story!

No one would ever imagine that one of the Ten Great Regalia and the person regalia of Wu Tianhun himself would.....be destroyed just like that.

And no one would ever believe it even if they were told....

Bai Yunfei went still. The Nephrite Throne crumbled from his

hands, falling to the ground in pieces of threes and fours.

He felt faint, and so did his assailant who looked at his right hand in a daze. The other person hadn't thought Bai Yunfei would use it to defend himself, and neither did he think the Nephrite Throne would be so fragile like that....

One second went by.

Then ten seconds.

A few dozen seconds after that.

Bai Yunfei looked to the shattered fragments of the Nephrite Throne, and then to the middle-aged man in black.

His body began to shiver with anger, and his eyes burned mightily with the fires of fury.

“You! F*cking! Bastard! You'll pay for this!!”

Very rarely did Bai Yunfei elect to swear. But those were the times when Bai Yunfei was truly mad. The wrinkles on his forehead were extraordinarily wrinkled, and his soulforce was raring to burst out from his body.

The fragments in his hands disappeared into his ring as Bai Yunfei cursed at his assailant, the fiery red light around his body growing in intensity with each passing second. In a flash of light, he was upon the other man with his right hand now holding onto the Fire-tipped Spear to stab the man in the throat!

The other man had still been in a daze when Bai Yunfei moved. Though the man was looking at his fist when Bai Yunfei drew close, he was able to realize the danger he was in and drew back in an instant to dodge the spear.

Hatred leaked into his eyes when he looked to Bai Yunfei.

It was his fault! He was the one that used the Nephrite Throne to defend himself!

If he hadn't used the Nephrite Throne to block the attack, the

throne wouldn't have been destroyed!

How would the man report this to his superiors?!

Just thinking about his failures made the man shiver uncontrollably. His hatred was practically overflowing now as he stepped further backwards. Orange overtook black as light surrounded his body before a sword appeared into his right hand.

Murderous, the man swung his sword at Bai Yunfei!

Overflowing with the strength of a late-stage Soul Exalt, the man's sword pressed against Bai Yunfei's spear, knocking him backwards!

Bai Yunfei was now on the defense rather than the offense!

Somewhat sobered up from his anger, Bai Yunfei was now ascertaining the man to be a bigger threat than before. The Cataclysmic Seal flew up around him, blocking another strike from the man's sword before he called for Xiao Qi to come in and help him.

“Chirp!!”

Another furious chirp from Xiao Qi came from up in the skies. Turning his head, Bai Yunfei looked just in time to see Xiao Qi fighting with a black bird.

A late-stage class six soulbeast, the shadow vulture!

This was presumably the soulbeast of his mysterious assailant. The shadow vulture was slightly stronger than Xiao Qi despite it having the Wind and Lightning Feather, and whenever Xiao Qi tried to attack with the Spatial Edge, the shadow vulture would dodge without fail.

Bai Yunfei rubbed at his right arm, slightly worried with this development. Retreating with the Flash Step, he looked to the still motionless thunderfire wolf.

At his command, the Beast Taming Ring around the thunderfire

wolf lit up with light, jolting the wolf back into activity with a furious roar!

Like lightning, it leapt towards not Bai Yunfei, but to the shadow vulture to join in the fight with Xiao Qi!

His success in ordering the thunderfire wolf to attack the shadow vulture gave Bai Yunfei some measure of comfort. The added help of the wolf would mean Xiao Qi shouldn't be in any major harm, even if the wolf was still without sentience. In its current state, the most basic of commands could be given, and that was enough for Xiao Qi to give it an edge, and perhaps that way, it'd be able to find an opportunity to kill the vulture.

The man was surprised to see the thunderfire wolf attack the shadow vulture rather than him, but he smiled nonetheless. If Bai Yunfei was so arrogant in his abilities to think that the thunderfire wolf would be better put in attacking the shadow vulture, then Bai Yunfei was a fool. The man didn't know how he was able to control the soulbeast from the Beast Taming School, but that didn't matter.

With all that said, Bai Yunfei's strength was shocking to him. He had only fought with him for several blows and knew Bai Yunfei was far stronger than a mid-stage Soul Exalt should be, but not strong enough still to defeat him.

Catching onto an opportunity, the man swung his sword to knock Bai Yunfei's spear aside before then striking at Bai Yunfei's heart with a fist filled with a strange black mist!

Bai Yunfei narrowed his eyes, this move was more than it seemed. Clenching his left fist tight, he gave a punch of his own at it!

“Bang!!”

One impact later, both combatants were sent stumbling backwards several meters.

Black mist coiled around Bai Yunfei's left arm, embedding his body with a strange sensation. It felt as if his innards were beginning to corrode and sap him of his soulforce!

And at the same time, some of his soulforce was forcibly drawn out from his body when his fist collided with the other!

It was a strange, but familiar sensation. A sensation Bai Yunfei felt like he recognized....

It didn't take long for him to realize why he felt this way. As soon as the realization hit him, Bai Yunfei's eyes grew red with fury!

“The Soul Refining School!!”

Chapter 450: Dual Flame Arts: Berserk Mode!

Bai Yunfei needed only a moment to understand why this technique was so familiar to him. He saw it once before in Curopia City, and it was the very technique that nearly led to his death if not for Tang Xinyun blocking it, the Soul Refining Palm!

This man was from the Soul Refining School!

Fury like none other blossomed immediately in his head!

Once before, Bai Yunfei vowed that the Soul Refining School would pay the price, and he would make good on that vow today!

The only thing that stopped him from going after the school in its entirety was due to his lack of strength. He had to force himself to stomach his anger and bide for time.

But now that a man from the school was here, how could he not be angry?

Since that man was here....that man would die!!

The strange energy eating up his soulforce was sapping him of his strength and leaving behind only the sense of 'powerlessness' with each moment it remained unchecked. It was a sensation far stronger than what he once experienced back in Curopia City, and back then, that type of power had left him completely unable to move.

But this time....

“Hm!” A tingling sensation from the +12 ring on his left hand activated then, distributing a wave of warmth and comfort throughout his arm.

This attack counted as a type of mental attack?!

The two fireseeds now circling about in his body chose then to

activate. Distributing elemental fire throughout his body, the fire began to burn at the intruding energy in an attempt to rid Bai Yunfei's body of it.

Very little time was needed for Bai Yunfei to make a full recovery, allowing Bai Yunfei to glare hatefully at the other man.

His recovery gave the other man no small amount of surprise. He hadn't thought Bai Yunfei would recover so quickly, but he smiled, "Even if you hate me so much, your inferior strength will mean your death!"

Drawing the sword close to him, the man kicked off against the ground to dash at Bai Yunfei. In a brilliant arc of orange, the sword swung down while his off-hand attacked Bai Yunfei again with the Soul Refining Palm.

Both actions were observed calmly by Bai Yunfei, whose body began to shimmer slightly around the edges. The shimmering grew even more intense before two figures separated from him, showing three identical figures with identical spears ready to greet him!

The +12 additional effect of the Fire-tipped Spear, Doppelganger!

Stepping back, the real Bai Yunfei shook his right hand, storing away the Fire-tipped Spear!

The man from the Soul Refining School narrowed his eyes, "Aren't you a little too easy to see through? If your real body isn't attacking, that makes this attack silly."

But when the other two Bai Yunfeis stabbed at him rather than retreat with the main body, he put up his sword in surprise. He successfully parried the spear coming at him from the left, but then he was surprised to feel the spear from the right nick him across the side and drawing blood.

This was the real one!

His realization came almost far too late as the next salvo came at him. His sword slashed left and right as he tried to protect himself,

but with each blow, the man came to realize that these two figures were 'weaker' than the Bai Yunfei who fought him before. Charging his sword with orange light, the man made a decisive blow onto the two by bisecting them in half!

The two doppelgangers were dispelled without any further trouble, but before the man could relax, Bai Yunfei was starting up the next part of his plan!

From his safe spot a hundred meters away, Bai Yunfei was....powering up!

Right in front of the other man's very eyes, Bai Yunfei's strength exploded from being a mid-stage Soul Exalt to a late-stage Soul Exalt!

Bai Yunfei's face twisted in on itself as if experiencing a tremendous amount of pain. The expression in his eyes was the most definite, as it looked like he was on the verge of going crazy.

The seals Bai Yunfei formed gave life to two different streams of elemental fire, with both streams fluctuating differently to one another. As per usual whenever he entered the 'coil' form, the two essence fireseeds danced around an invisible center without ever touching.

But this time, the fires they were released were flowing into one another!

Harmonizing the flow between the two unique streams of elemental fire was impossible. One stream would have to devour the other in order to achieve 'harmony', but in the case that the two were fuse together without one dominating the other, then the resultant power would be.....many times stronger than normal!

This was a form that acceded the 'coil' form. A form that gave an additional boost of strength by forcibly combining the two streams of elemental fire, the 'fusion' form!

To draw a better comparison between the two forms, if the 'coil'

form increased Bai Yunfei's strength by a degree of two, then the 'fusion' form increased Bai Yunfei's strength by three, four, and maybe even more!

But this type of explosive power couldn't be controlled! Or at least, it couldn't be completely controlled!

Under the 'fusion' form, the elemental fire becomes hard to control and explosive.

That was why Bai Yunfei called this form, Berserk Mode!

Back when he was was a peak late-stage Soul Ancestor, Bai Yunfei was able to maintain this mode for just a few scant seconds.

But now that he was an early-stage Soul Exalt, he could maintain this mode for up to....ten minutes!

Ten minutes wasn't a very long time, so Bai Yunfei usually opted for a very fast battle!

Bai Yunfei had never felt so much power course through his body before! It was so abundant in his body that it actually hurt, but Bai Yunfei could bear the pain. All of his muscles bulged with power and his internal organs began to groan under the stress, but he was still coherent enough to give a mighty death glare at his enemy. Lifting the Fire-tipped Spear, he went still for a second before immediately disappearing into a blur!

The surprise the other man felt had already passed, though. What Bai Yunfei used was merely just a technique to boost his strength to the levels of a late-stage Soul Exalt, so no matter how surprising it was, he still wouldn't be a match for him!

That was what he thought, but the more he fought Bai Yunfei, the more he started to doubt his initial statement. Bai Yunfei's attacks were harder than before and far more berserk in tempo! The Fire-tipped Spear was brandished so quickly that it was like the wind itself, and the stabs it brought were as dangerous as ever, and Bai Yunfei wasn't in the mood to retreat. He constantly dodged

the man's sword strokes by either a hair's breadth or by using his own bracers to absorb the damage before retaliating with his spear, leading to both parties exchanging minor injuries again and again.

An additional factor of surprise was Bai Yunfei's speed. Bai Yunfei belonged to the fire type, but his speed was by no means inferior to those belonging to the lightning type. Not once did his soulforce seem to wane, and his movements were as strong and robust as ever.

A few precious minutes went by before the man start to feel his strength start to taper away, he was....he was losing!

The realization wasn't debilitating to him. The man knew Bai Yunfei wouldn't be able to last for much longer under this state. Enemies like Bai Yunfei who could increase their strength temporarily wasn't a new thing to him, and he knew that if he could just persist for long enough, the enemy definitely suffer from the flaw in the technique.

“Cling!!”

The doppelgangers of Bai Yunfei came at him again, leaving the man without any other choice but to defend against the spear.

But then...

“Boom!!”

The explosion effect of the spear, activate!

Unexpected thrusting backwards by the explosion, the man's chest was burning with fire and pain. Blood came out from the wounds on his chest and from his mouth in decent amounts despite having his sword to mitigate most of the damage.

Emboldened by his success, Bai Yunfei pressed on, swapping the spear to his left hand so that he could activate the Flameblade Bracer on his right arm.

It was time for the Flame Winged Blades!

“Bang!!”

It formed in front of Bai Yunfei, extending three meters in length before it pelted straight through the elemental earth barrier of the man and cutting into his right arm.

He grunted again, feeling as the pain shot through his arm in addition to the pain in his chest. When he looked up, Bai Yunfei had pointed the Cataclysmic Seal towards him, expanding in size to become a miniature mountain in an attempt to smash into him!

The one-two combo he was hit with left him unable to regain his battle rhythm. So without any better option, the man could only cross his orange-lit arms in front of him to try and protect himself with his elemental earth.

Using the strength offered to it by a late-stage Soul Exalt, the Cataclysmic Seal was at its strongest peak of power yet. It collided with the elemental earth of the man’s barrier before breaking it into pieces and smashing into him!

“Ptchhh!”

Dealt yet another blow, the man went flying in a spray of blood!

Chapter 451: Battling a Soul Refiner, and the Soul Sucking Skill!

Doppelgangers, the spear explosion, the Flame Winged Dagger, and the Cataclysmic Seal....

Bai Yunfei was relentless in his onslaught. Each move in the sequence flowed together with minimal superfluous movements. All of this was possible only due to Bai Yunfei's practiced hand with his equipment. The Bai Yunfei of today was no longer the weakling of before. He was Bai Yunfei, the late-stage Soul Exalt who was slowly beating his enemy bit by bit!

Another spray of blood flew out from his enemy's mouth. Rattled by the unexpected blow, the man felt similar to being a piece of paper flowing in the wind with just how useless he had been in front of that brick!

If he had to describe himself at the moment, it'd be just one word: fear!

Previous to this three-hit combo, he had been so sure that he was close to waiting out all of Bai Yunfei's attacks. He just needed to wait a little longer to defeat Bai Yunfei, but now that the tables had turned, he wasn't even sure if he'd be able to last until then....

Damnit!

He needed to launch a counter attack!

He wiped the blood away from his mouth with furious passion. As an attendant of his school and late-stage Soul Exalt ready to step onto the next level, the man feared very few from those not yet at the Soul King level.

So how was it that there was a weakling early-stage Soul Exalt beating him to a pulp?!

The man forced soulforce to his legs, forming platforms for him

to leap up and over the Cataclysmic Seal. Looking down at Bai Yunfei, his eyes started to shine brilliantly with golden light. Traveling down from his eyes to the sword in his hand, the light filled the sword with energy before the man swung it down to release a torrent of golden light!

This was his soul skill, the Golden Blade Wave!

As its name implied, the golden energy released resembled that of a sturdy wave as it ‘poured’ down onto Bai Yunfei as if threatening to drown him in it!

Bai Yunfei observed the attack with narrowed eyes. From what he could tell, this attack had a wide area of attack and wouldn’t be easy to dodge. He lifted the Cataclysmic Seal up in front of him, allowing for his soulforce to be drained into it and have it grow in size!

From its original size of a hundred meters, the Cataclysmic Seal transformed three times its size to become as large as a mountain to stop the wave in entirety!

The Cataclysmic Seal was now a gigantic block that stood on top of the earth, making it look like a natural mountain had sprunged up to divide Bai Yunfei and his enemy.

“It can still grow bigger!!”

The man was nearly besides himself with shock. He had never heard of a soul armament whose original size being only the size of a palm being able to grow so tremendously large. As he stood in front of it, he started to feel the situation to be a little ridiculous even, and he began to wonder if he was stuck in some sort of illusion or something.

But that notion was dashed when he watched his attack slam into the Cataclysmic Seal. It slammed against the wall like a proper wave would, and then as physics would dictate, it started to flow backwards back in his direction!

Now completely safe from the attack, Bai Yunfei had the Cataclysmic Seal shrink back to its original size. Though having the brick in such a large state was extremely powerful, it was also extremely costly in soulforce.

Unless Bai Yunfei was sure he could kill with it, he wanted to keep his soulforce consumption to a minimum just in case.

With the ‘great mountain’ that stood between them now gone, Bai Yunfei was the first to race back up into the skies. A hundred meters above the other, Bai Yunfei placed away the Cataclysmic Seal when he realized the other person was preparing yet another soul skill!

Activating the Flash Steps, he zoomed towards the man and threw three separate Burstfire Daggers and then another dagger that disappeared without a trace behind the other—it was the Flickering Dagger!

It was one of Bai Yunfei’s most strongest daggers in his possession and had also a very practical effect added onto it.

Flickering Dagger stats:

Equipment Grade: Mid Earth

Elemental Affinity: Wind

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 880

Additional Attack: 400

Soul Compatibility: 11%

+10 Additional Effect: 60% increase in piercing strength.

Upgrade Requirement: 100 Soulpoints

Dodging the three Burstfire Daggers without any time to waste, the man was beginning to feel safe before he realized a fourth dagger aimed at his heart!

Completely unable to dodge, the man tried his best to reflect the dagger with his sword. The dagger slammed into it with a clang,

but rather than seeing it deflected, the man felt a sharp pain in his chest!

Looking down, he saw a hole in the middle of his high-earth tier soul armament, and a nearly-transparent dagger stabbing through it!

Sweat immediately started to form over his skin as panic sunk in. It was truly fortunate for him that the dagger had only stabbed just an inch into his body, and not completely into it as he first feared!

“Just how many soul armaments does he have?!” The man cried out to himself. Over the course of the battle so far, the man had counted at least ten, including the daggers, making him go slightly mad with disbelief.

But now wasn't the time for him to grumble and complain.

A fiery spear was coming straight at his eye!

Prior to the dagger landing, Bai Yunfei was already moving forward. He didn't care whether or not if it hit, Bai Yunfei just wanted to attack.

The spear stabbed onto the broken sword of his enemy before pushing past it and across the man's right shoulder.

Eyeing Bai Yunfei's position, the man's right hand suddenly flew up to grab onto the left hand of Bai Yunfei!

It was with great joy that the man's hand clutched onto Bai Yunfei's wrist. Grunting in exertion as his body started to absorb the golden light around him, black mist replaced it as an outbreak of elemental darkness went from his right hand into Bai Yunfei's left arm!

Bai Yunfei, who had just about to strike the man again, felt his body start to grow weak. Looking down to where his hand was being grabbed onto, Bai Yunfei was startled to feel his soulforce start to drain away!

Secret art of the Soul Refining School, Soul Sucking Skill!!

Author Note: This is another world version of Jin Yong's 吸星大法

A battle of close combat was what people from the Soul Refining School excelled at, and it was to Bai Yunfei's great misfortune and inexperience that he fell for it!

The feeling of powerlessness grew heavier and heavier even with the +12 ring on his left hand working continuously against it. But in time, Bai Yunfei felt himself almost unable to move!

It didn't seem the soul refiner was able to do anything else either, otherwise he would've raised the still functional sword of his to slit Bai Yunfei's throat and end the battle there.

He was actually surprised with how Bai Yunfei was resisting; the resistance he was experiencing was far stronger than he thought, and the absorption rate was a lot slower than he anticipated. He tried to calm down, though. With how panicked Bai Yunfei looked, the man was pretty confident his own victory was at hand. He just needed to clean out the rest of Bai Yunfei's soulforce and leave him dry.

From there, wouldn't it be a simple matter to kill Bai Yunfei?

Sneering at the thought, the soul refiner pushed his soulforce a little harder to work the elemental darkness faster. And the more he pushed, the more Bai Yunfei's face started to pale and his soulforce start to lessen!

Each push the soul refiner made pushed Bai Yunfei closer and closer down a cliff. If Bai Yunfei's soulforce was a jar of water, the soul refiner was draining it out with a bucket once every second!

Three seconds passed, then four, then five....

Ten seconds later, Bai Yunfei's soulforce was well below the halfway point!!

Chapter 452: Incinerated

Due to his inexperience with fighting against soul refiners, Bai Yunfei had fallen for the trap, and now his soulforce was being drained away!

In just under ten seconds, Bai Yunfei's soulforce was already down to less than half! He'd die if the soul refiner was left unchecked!

Then when the soul refiner made another push to absorb his soulforce.....

The black mist around Bai Yunfei's arm was rapidly condensing when all of a sudden, the Yun's Soul Ring on Bai Yunfei's right hand lit up in a brilliant gleam of light, preventing from anymore of his soulforce from being absorbed!

Yun's Soul Ring's +12 additional effect, activate!

10% chance of immunity to a spirit-based attack.
Cooldown of 1 hour.

“Now's my chance!!”

Eyes flying wide open, Bai Yunfei knew then it was the time to strike. Disregarding the fact that his left arm was still enshrouded with black mist, he punched at the soul refiner with a heavy right straight!

Eighty-one Fold Fist Force!

“Bang!!”

The sound of bones cracking accompanied Bai Yunfei's fist punching the man, and under his startled eyes, the soul refiner flew a hundred meters away from Bai Yunfei!!

Contrary to what the soul refiner thought, Bai Yunfei had actually been biding his time to wait for the Yun's Soul Ring to

activate. It was an effect that was well worth the agonizing ten second wait since it'd allow Bai Yunfei to attack with all he had!

Prior to the fight, Bai Yunfei had swapped out several of his equipment for some others more well-suited to fighting a soul refiner. The rings on his were well suited for this battle, with the left granting him “15% decrease to all spirit related attacks”, and the Yun’s Soul Ring with its +12 additional effect.

The soul refiner came to a stop a good hundred meters away from Bai Yunfei, coughing twice to spit up the blood. From how things were looking internally, his internal organs were in quite a bad shape. The Eighty-one Fold Fist Force had done a great deal of damage to him since he hadn’t been expecting it, and the strength Bai Yunfei showed to him then was nearly enough to destroy his heart completely.

On the other side, Bai Yunfei wheezed slightly to himself. The feeling of having his soulforce sucked out of him was very unpleasant to say the least.

Looking hatefully at the soul refiner, Bai Yunfei bent a finger to call the Cataclysmic Seal to him. In response, the brick grew in size before flying at the soul refiner!

Still looking unwell, the soul refiner gritted his teeth and moved to the side in an attempt to dodge. Due to his present weakness and the Cataclysmic Seal suddenly expanding in size just enough when it passed him, the sword was knocked out from his hand!

Disarming the man of his sword hadn’t been the only thing the Cataclysmic Seal did, as a stream of fire then wrapped itself around his body!

+10 Additional effect of the Cataclysmic Seal, activated!

10% chance to activate ‘Flame Twister’ and restrict the mobility of another by 10% for a maximum of ten seconds upon attacking.

Cooldown of 1 minute.

It was with great fear that the soul refiner watched and felt the coil of fire wrap around his body and make him feel even slower than before!

The wail of a bird behind him gave rise to yet another source of concern then!

He knew this cry; this was his contracted soulbeast, the shadow vulture! Besides himself with fear, the soul refiner tried to turn his head to see what was the matter when an agonizing stab of pain in his chest halted his movements and forced him to spit another mouthful of blood out!

The same mournful wail was heard by Bai Yunfei, who turned to look rather than attack. From what he saw, Xiao Qi had managed to land two Spatial Edges onto the throat and left wing of the shadow vulture before its dead carcass fell down to the ground below.

The thunderfire wolf and Xiao Qi had managed to dispatch the shadow vulture faster than he thought!

He turned back to the soul refiner who was preoccupied with the sudden feeling of pain he was having. Knowing an opportunity when he saw one, Bai Yunfei stored away his spear to bring his hands together. Formulating seal after seal, Bai Yunfei allowed himself to bask in the warmth of elemental fire as they converged around his arms.

The Dual Dragon Burst!!

He was willing to use his strongest move without hesitation. This attack would be undodgeable with the soul refiner's current state of health, and the Dual Dragon Burst would ensure that he'd die without any further issues!

“Boom!!!!”

A maelstrom of fire descended upon the plane, covering the soul refiner with the fire left behind by the two dragons.

But rather than feeling satisfied, Bai Yunfei inhaled sharply, “He’s not dead?!”

The aura of the soul refiner was very clearly still in the maelstrom! Somehow, the man had managed to pull up enough elemental energy to protect himself from dying.

“Chirp!”

Xiao Qi chose then to dive into this battle, shooting a Spatial Edge to strike at the center of the maelstrom of fire!

It dove into the eye of the maelstrom, carving out a crescent-shaped hole as it traveled....

There was a cry of pain then, and after that.....

The soul refiner’s aura was no more!

“Boom!!”

The soulforce holding the maelstrom together collapsed, inciting the maelstrom to explode in a flurry of elemental fire into the area!

Hotter than what the soul refiner’s body could handle, the elemental fire reduced it to cinders, leaving behind only a space ring for Bai Yunfei to call into his hand.

The ring hadn’t yet fallen into his hand when Bai Yunfei turned an eye to Xiao Qi.

Had Xiao Qi actually been contesting against him for his ‘prey’?

Both of Xiao Qi’s wings were folded inwardly on itself--the natural pose of Xiao Qi when it entered its meditative pose to ‘level up’.

Bai Yunfei shook his head; he’d worry about that issue later.

Looking all around, Bai Yunfei was this time prepared for any other ambushes. Soulsense on high alert, Bai Yunfei waited for it to warn him of anything.

The detection of another living being came quick, much to Bai

Yunfei's dismay. Whirling around towards the direction of it, Bai Yunfei withdrew his Fire Eagle and fired off a bullet to the east!

“Skreee!!”

From the area Bai Yunfei fired at, the shrill cries of a soulbeast made itself known to Bai Yunfei before a bat-shaped figure took off farther towards the east.

But the bullet from the Fire Eagle continued onwards to chase down the fleeing soulbeast; this wasn't an ordinary bullet, it was a homing bullet!

“An early-stage class five blood bat.....” Bai Yunfei murmured, “I'm being overly cautious if I'm getting riled up over an ordinary soulbeast....”

Chapter 453: Zhi Tian

“No matter I guess, gotta leave this place quick.” He spoke then.

Moving quickly, Bai Yunfei first landed near where Xing Yuan’s body was to take his space ring and other stuff. Then collecting the other dropped items he had, Bai Yunfei carefully swept up the fragments of the Nephrite Throne and stored them.

Xiao Qi was about done with its levelling up when Bai Yunfei put away the last fragment. It chirped once to get Bai Yunfei’s attention, who then turned his head just in time to see something strange.

Xiao Qi was above the shadow vulture’s body, but rather than taking its soulgem into its mouth, Xiao Qi floated the soulgem into the mouth of the thunderfire wolf!

There was a swallowing sound when the thunderfire wolf swallowed the soulgem. Black mist started to exude out from the wolf’s body, healing the wounds it sustained over the battles almost so quickly that the wounds seemed to melt away from its body!

Since the soulgem was clearly of the darkness attribute, the thunderfire wolf would be unable to absorb the elemental darkness from it and only the pure energy.

“This....”

Tongue-tied by what was happening in front of him, Bai Yunfei watched what Xiao Qi was doing to the wolf in silence.

Now wasn’t the time to be gawking, though. He still needed to get out of here. Turning his eye towards a previously-missed white stone, Bai Yunfei busied himself picking up the missing fragments of the throne rather than watch the thunderfire wolf.

.....

At the same time a good distance away from Bai Yunfei's current position.

“Zhi Tian, where are we going?”

In the dense forest, a slightly tired voice called out to another. Two figures were walking slowly through the forest, with one tired young man in gray following listlessly behind the man in white ahead of him.

This young man was Na Lanyin!

The one in front of him was known as ‘Zhi Tian’, and was an old man with grizzly white-hair. Even his eyebrows were white from age, and his long white beard hung beneath his chin. Paired with his kindly expression, the man looked quite scholarly.

He turned back to Na Lanyin, a smile on his face, “We’re going south simply because we need to leave the forest. Do you wish to stay here for another year, then?”

“It’s fine that we’re leaving, but why are we walking?! Can’t we fly? And why don’t you just use some form of instantaneous movement to move?! And....and can you please not antagonize anyone else like you did with those Soul Kings you blocked a while back?!”

Na Lanyin pleaded almost angrily at him, “If you want to anger them, go for it! They’re afraid of you, but they’re not afraid of me, so anger them when I’m not around! Every single time you annoy someone, they always look at me like an insect....just....please....I’m only a mid-stage Soul Exalt, you know? Angering every Soul King and class seven soulbeast is only going to make my life harder, you know?”

He added another line after that, “Or are you starting to regret making an agreement with me and trying to kill me indirectly?”

Zhi Tian shot him a glance, a small smile on his face. “What uncouth words are coming out from your mouth? I’m merely

letting you get used to the killing intent of a Soul King, it'll help you in the long run."

"....."

What kind of reason was that?

Rather than pressing the issue, Na Lanyin asked instead, "Zhi Tian, why won't you tell me what happened over there?" he pointed his head to the east, "why did you stop those two class seven soulbeasts and that Soul King? And why aren't we going there too?"

Zhi Tian had actually stopped all of the Soul Kings he came across from heading towards the east!! It was no wonder no one else went after Bai Yunfei, they were all stopped by this man. If not for that, Bai Yunfei would've met several Soul Kings by now....

"There's enough trouble in that direction, let's not add to whatever's left of it and stick to our own." Zhi Tian shook his head, "It's quite simple why I stopped those people. It was what I saw 'fate' wanted me to do."

"What?!" Na Lanyin's head snapped to attention, "Hold on! What are you saying, you can see 'fate'?!"

"How would that be possible? Of course I can't see it."

"But didn't you just say...."

"What I said was your fate." Zhi Tian pointed to him, "Your 'fate' was telling me to stop them, and as per our agreement, I was helping you by having you meet those Soul Kings first."

"....."

Na Lanyin had a quirky frown on his face, his mind thinking, "I'd have to be brain-dead in order to stop people like that. Zhi Tian has something else to his words, I bet."

"What does my 'fate' have to do with anything? Is what's happening over there related to me somehow?" Na Lanyin asked.

Whatever it was that was happening over to the east, Na Lanyin knew none of it. Clearly, there was something Zhi Tian wasn't telling him, and that made him all the more curious to find out.

‘It's not related to you, but at the same time, it is.’ Zhi Tian spoke cryptically. ‘I can just faintly see a ‘strand’ of your ‘fate’ intertwined with another, but whatever more is unknown to me. Me stopping those Soul Kings were merely whims of mine in respect to that strand. It is, after all, an important strand of fate.’

‘A ‘strand’ of fate??’ Na Lanyin asked, far more confused about what Zhi Tian was getting at. He knew he wouldn't get an answer, so he said nothing about it. Though, if not for the fact that he knew who Zhi Tian was, Na Lanyin would've taken him for a swindler of some sort; he too, moonlighted as a ‘swindler’ like this to some degree, so this degree of mysteriousness wasn't new to him.

‘When you say this ‘strand’ of fate....’ he began, ‘I've actually seen a person who had more strands of fate than others. In fact, I've never seen anyone with more strands than him. He had more the second time I met him than the first; it really was quite strange.’

‘Ah? Is that so?’ Zhi Tian spoke, his eyebrows raised upwards. ‘Those who are so heavily entwined with fate are special among their generation. They face more hardships than others, but their chances are many. Sadly, they often die well before their time.’

‘But if they can escape an untimely death, then they will become someone of glory....’

He looked up to the skies, ‘Forget it, let's dispense with the walking. I'll take you there now.’

‘Eh?’ Na Lanyin spoke, ‘Don't you need to stop anyone else?’

‘We're all but done. I did say it was just a whim, so don't mind your head about it. I was only stopping those from going in a

certain direction, the other directions....I can't do anything about it, like north where the class seven area is....

“I haven't been out of the Soulbeast Forest for a millenia, I wonder how much the continent has changed since then.....”

Zhi Tian sighed at that, grabbing Na Lanyin's arm before taking one step forward into the a distortion in space and disappearing away from sight.

Chapter 454: Saved Thanks to the Bloodhowl Mark

The piece Bai Yunfei picked up then was the bottom half of the Nephrite Throne—specifically being the base of it—so it was bigger in size than the other fragments.

“They were all scattered so far away....I’ve already collected a lot of them, but I’m still not sure if that’s all of it or if there’s anymore anywhere else....” Bai Yunfei sighed, looking listlessly left and right.

A hundred meters away, there was a river flowing quite rapidly....

“You there! What are you holding in your hand?!”

Suddenly, a furious voice called forth, breaking Bai Yunfei out into goosebumps!

Whirling around, Bai Yunfei noticed then a person who had appeared out of nowhere. He wore plain clothing, but his bronze-colored eyes were extraordinarily piercing. There was no elemental energy being used to support his feet, and his soulforce was slightly different than what a soul cultivator would have—with it having a rather feral feel to it....

He’s a class seven soulbeast!

This man (or soulbeast), had the strength of an early-stage class seven. Unlike the Two Winged Kings, his strength was hidden well enough to escape Bai Yunfei’s detection, but not his observation.

Heart skipping a beat, Bai Yunfei tried to maintain a calm expression on his face. Most of his time had been spent trying to collect as many pieces as he can before he’d make his leave, but Bai Yunfei didn’t think that someone so strong would arrive so quickly.

To make matters worse, he was in a pretty bad state, though even if he was at his best, there'd be no way Bai Yunfei would want to fight against a Soul King levelled person....

“But he doesn't seem to know about the Nephrite Throne, judging from his expression. Maybe I can bluff my way out of this....” Bai Yunfei figured.

Schooling his emotions, Bai Yunfei held up the stone in his hand, “Junior Bai Yunfei pays his respects to Senior. I am a student of the Crafting School, and I've been seeking special ores like this to use in my craft.”

His words were half-truths and half-lies, but he hoped that his identity would be enough to hoodwink the soulbeast.

“The Crafting School?” The man narrowed his eyes, giving Bai Yunfei a closer look. Eyes flicking here and there as he looked about, the man saw several things; Xing Yuan, Bian Dangnan, and the corpse of a leopard.

None of these three seemed odd to him, but then when he turned around to where two soulbeasts were hurrying over, his eyes widened as he saw the connection between them!

Him seeing a class six soulbeast was startling to say the least, but when he saw the thunderfire wolf, his surprised expression twisted in on itself in anger!

“Beast Taming School!!”

Furious at the seeming lies of Bai Yunfei, the soulbeast turned back to him with the intent to kill!

“Lies! You are scum from the Beast Taming School!!” He howled, purple light exploding from his body in great quantity. He raised his hand and pointed a finger at Bai Yunfei. In the next instant, a bolt of purple lightning came down from the skies to come down onto Bai Yunfei!

Bai Yunfei knew that the situation had suddenly grown dire

before the man could even shout. Frightened out of his skin almost, Bai Yunfei knew he had to act before it was too late.

Summoning the Cataclysmic Seal, he forced in as much soulforce as he could into it to expand above his head for protection and an additional barrier to form around him. At the same time, his right hand flickered for a moment before he raised an item into the air.

“Senior, please stay your hand and look at this!!”

The item he held was barely the size of his palm, but it appeared to be a fragment of a soulbeast’s bone.

This item had actually been in his space ring for a very long time. It was, in fact, the item given to him by Hong Yin back in the Azure Cloud Province, the Bloodhowl Mark!

Back then, Bai Yunfei then really understand what it was for when Hong Yin gave it to him. But he came to understand that it was precious; so he never forgot about it even when he entered the Soulbeast Forest.

Knowing now that this person in front of him was a soulbeast and ready to kill him, Bai Yunfei spared no hesitation to show the item to him.

As soon as the Bloodhowl Mark appeared, Bai Yunfei pressed his soulforce into it. The bone fragment started to shine a dark red light—red not like the color of fire, but the color of....blood!

Just faintly, the image of a blood-colored wolf’s head appeared above the bone fragment, showing it to be seemingly howling towards the skies, though no sound came out from him.

And yet, a power like none else exploded from it to travel hundreds of meters away!

“The Bloodhowl Mark!”

The soulbeast in front of Bai Yunfei realized what this symbol was straight away, his eyes widening even more.

His hand dropped back to his side, which canceled out the bolt of lightning nearly upon Bai Yunfei and returning the elemental lightning back to the world.

With the crisis averted, Bai Yunfei mentally wiped his sweat away, though he could still feel his entire back drenched with it. If he had been just a little bit later with the item, that bolt of lightning would've most likely struck him dead on the spot.

He sucked in a deep breath of air. Calming himself, Bai Yunfei spoke up as confidently as he could, "You are correct, senior, this is indeed the Bloodhowl Mark, it was given to me by brother Hong Yin a long time ago. I really am from the Crafting School, and this thunderfire wolf was previously under the command of the fifth elder of the Beast Taming School, Xing Yuan. His corpse is over there, if senior would like to see proof!"

Explaining as quickly as he could, Bai Yunfei tried to alleviate all the doubt away from the soulbeast's mind as possible.

"Hong Yin?" The man repeated in surprise. A pensive look crossed over his face to replace the killing intent, and his eyes followed Bai Yunfei's finger where Xing Yuan's corpse was.

From farther away, Xiao Qi could only see a man attacking Bai Yunfei and chirped angrily in response. Spreading its wings wide, it was about to fly towards the enemy when the thunderfire wolf—much to Bai Yunfei's surprise—moved in front of Xiao Qi as if to stop it.

"That was Xing Yuan?!" The man thought to himself. "I did hear that Xing Yuan's main soulbeast puppet was a thunderfire wolf, so this young man's response might not be a lie...."

Ruminating a little longer on the question, he turned back to face Bai Yunfei, a calm look back on his face. "I am the ruler of the thunder wolves, the Thunder Wolf King, do you swear by your words just now?!"

The thunder wolves was a group of soulbeasts that were relatively numerous in the soulbeast world. As a part of the wolves clan, the thunder wolves had also the thunderfire wolves as a small division of their group.

Eyes like fire now, the soulbeast stared unflinchingly at Bai Yunfei, as if peering into his soul to judge his next words. This was the last attempt for Bai Yunfei to speak the truth and nothing but the truth.

Bai Yunfei's expression didn't change. "This junior goes by the name Bai Yunfei. My master is Zi Jin of the Crafting School. It is an honor to meet you, Thunder Wolf King."

The soulbeast's eyes flickered once. Bai Yunfei's eyes didn't change at all.

The stand off continued briefly before the Thunder Wolf King finally made his decision by removing the pressure he had been exerting onto Bai Yunfei earlier.

"If there's nothing senior would like from me," Bai Yunfei spoke up in relief, "then this junior will be taking his leave."

He wanted to leave this place as soon as possible, so saying goodbye now would expediate that process.

"You may leave," The Thunder Wolf King began, "but the thunderfire wolf goes with me!"

He stepped towards the Thunderfire Wolf as he spoke. Drawing close to the thunderfire wolf, he reached a hand towards it when the thunderfire wolf bolted away from his touch! Growling in warning, the thunderfire wolf arched its back in a ready to fight position, as if unwilling to allow the other soulbeast to get close.

"Eh?" The soulbeast paused, unsure of why the thunderfire wolf would react so violently.

Then, his eyes began to radiate with fury once again to look at Bai Yunfei, "You...." he growled threateningly.

But all he could see on Bai Yunfei's face was his surprise and confusion; neither of which were faked to his knowledge.

He furrowed his eyebrows, this situation was getting far more strange by the second. Bai Yunfei had the Bloodhowl Mark, so he couldn't force an answer, and neither was he willing to force the thunderfire wolf away.

"Forget it." he acquiesced. "Whatever secrets this youngster has, I'll have to report first, especially since he has that mark...."

He eyed Bai Yunfei once more, but without another word, he left the area.

"....."

Watching as the Thunder Wolf King's person disappeared off into the distance, Bai Yunfei shook his head. Calling out to Xiao Qi, he and the two soulbeasts quickly left the area.

Chapter 455: A Clone!

“Shaaa.....shaaaaa.....”

A shadowy figure moved about in the haphazard forest, the trees and foliage hiding his figure from being seen.

It wasn't long before the figure could hide no more—as there was no more tree or foliage to hide behind in the barren wasteland he came onto.

This wasteland was the battleground where a group of Soul Kings had once fought.

Incidentally, it was also the area where the Black Dragon King had perished.

With his death, the Two Winged Kings, Wu Lingtian, and others left the place a long time ago, turning the area into a silent but empty area to be in, especially at night like it was now.

At the edge of this wasteland appeared a figure whose movements stood out among his surroundings. Slinking silently like a thief, the figure moved towards the edge of the forest, sticking only its head above the bushes to carefully look around the field with its eyes and soulsense.

Hidden for a few additional minutes, the figure then stepped out into the open to run off towards the center of the wasteland.

It was only when the figure ran out into the open its person could be seen. And if Bai Yunfei was here, he would've been shocked to see who it was.

It was....the blue-eyes wyrm!!

Somehow, the blue-eyes wyrm had unexpectedly stayed behind in the area after Bai Yunfei left it!

A very human-like gleam of opportunistic light shined in its eyes as it stalked forwards. Seemingly interested in something in this

area, it seemed afraid of turning back into its originally large size in favor of this 'chibi' sized version.

Assumably, it would be a lot faster to run away in this form.

It didn't take long for the wyrm to traverse the battlefield. Nearing the center of it all, it avoided a horrifyingly large gulch to reach a small pool of what seemed to be red water.

This pool of red was about fifty-meters large and was filled with a thick red substance.

It was blood!

The blood of the Black Dragon King!

This was where the Black Dragon King had been beheaded by Yun Lingtian, and where his blood was drained!

All of the blood that had sprayed out from the Black Dragon King's neck had sprayed into this area to form a pool of blood. Even after so much time had passed, the blood hadn't congealed at all and was still simmering with heat.

The blue-eyes wyrm stared avariciously at the pool of blood. It opened its jaws wide open, allowing for the blood to be drawn into its mouth!

Like a black hole, the blue-eyes wyrm continued to take in all of the blood, and after an entire minute, the pool had been entirely drained!

Smacking its mouth with its scarlet-red tongue, the blue-eyes wyrm looked seemingly satisfied. Looking all around itself to see if anyone was watching, the blue-eyes wyrm turned around and made a beeline straight for the forest and out of sight....

.....

Excluding the small interlude that was the blue-eyes wyrm, the entire area was soon returned to a deathly silence.

And after a long amount of time.....

There stood a crater in the middle of the wastelands. It was filled with the leftover rain water from the battle that took place, making it about several dozen meters deep with water.

Within the waters of the crater, a series of runes started to float to the surface, and then....a figure in black!

Its ascent from beneath the waters had been without warning. It hadn't even the slightest of aura to it, making it seem like a demon.

Now standing completely on top of the water, the figure could be seen in full clarity....

The Black Dragon King!!

This person was the Black Dragon King!

It was impossible!

Completely and utterly impossible!

He had clearly died in the battle earlier, his soul destroyed by the Two Winged Kings and his head beheaded by Yun Lingtian! Even his body had been taken away by Wu Tianling and his blood drunk by the blue-eyes wyrm....

So how was it that he was standing here in one piece?!

Even the Black Dragon King looked to be in a daze of some sort, his eyes looking at the black aura swirling around his hands in front of him. His entire body began to tremble, his eyes exuding all the hatred he could muster from it!

“The Beast Taming School, the Two Winged Kings, and Wu Tianling....” he spat their names with staccato, “I will never forgive you all. Never in my entire life.....! Forcing I, the Black Dragon King, to such extreme steps....I will kill you all slowly and painfully!!”

This man was without a doubt the Black Dragon King!

He lived!

No.

Saying he lived wouldn't be the right word for it. He did truly 'die' already. That peak late-stage class seven Black Dragon King had well and truly died....

This one was a clone!!

In this world, there was perhaps nobody that knew that the Black Dragon King had another magical ability!

The ability to form a clone!

After great difficulty, the Black Dragon King became able to 'split' himself into another body!

But this clone didn't have life to it. To be more accurate, it was a 'spare' body.

Its physiological structure and blood was identical to the Black Dragon King, but it lacked one thing: a 'soul'. The Black Dragon King never wanted to use this spare if possible, since it would only 'wake' when his real body was truly dead.....

Half a year ago, the Beast Taming School had him surrounded and nearly dead. By using extraordinary tactics to escape and hide himself in slumber, he was able to evade death, and with the Nephrite Throne, he was able to dedicate half a year's worth of time to his self-recovery.

But there was one thing he didn't account for: the Beast Taming School had known he was hiding here and posted several people here to guard him!

Angered well and truly by that, the Black Dragon King grew afraid. His life was in danger, and he was without any other options.

His attack on Bai Yunfei had been completely coincidental. At that time, he had only thought that a stupid soul cultivator had stumbled across his hiding spot, so he decided to 'partake' on this

source of soulforce to hasten his recovery. But then when Bai Yunfei somehow escaped from his grasp, he decided not to give chase to prepare to deal with Liang Xing and the others.

Time growing shorter than ever, the Black Dragon King decide to make use of his final trump card—creating a clone with a sliver of his soul in it.

If his real body died, then the clone with that sliver of his soul would become the main body and waken as another ‘him’.

The unexpected happened one after another during that fight, and even though he fought to the best of his ability and used the Nephrite Throne as a distraction, the Black Dragon King had only been able to take one step away from the crater....

He didn’t ‘completely’ die, but he would no longer be the Black Dragon King, one of the Ten Soulbeast Rulers either. This clone of his had only the strength of a peak late-stage class six with just one special ability: the ability to transform into a human.

So drastic was this change that even his aura was different than before.

In other words, the Black Dragon King from before had been completely killed off from the world, with this one taking its place.

“No matter. I need to find the Nephrite Throne, as long as I have that, I can hide for the next hundred years and make use of my private stock to get back my strength. When the time comes, I’ll devour them all!!” The Black Dragon King roared furiously to himself.

He sucked in two deep breaths in preparation to leave the place.

“I’ve been waiting a long time for you, Black Dragon King....”

Right before the Black Dragon King could move, a person suddenly spoke out behind him, rooting him to the spot!

Chapter 456: The Final Victor

It was only after waiting such a long time that the Black Dragon King had dared poke his head out, and someone had actually been waiting for him as calmly as if they were waiting for their tea to brew!

“Im—impossible!!”

The Black Dragon King’s face ashened from disbelief straight away. Even though his strength was that of a peak late-stage class six, his soul was still that of a class seven and had the instincts to go with it.

He didn’t even sense this man until he spoke!

That could only mean one thing....the person in hiding is stronger than the Black Dragon King at his strongest!

When the person spoke, his aura descended down onto the Black Dragon King, locking him into place while also confirming his greatest fears.

Slowly forcing his body to turn around, the Black Dragon King turned up to look at where the voice was coming from.

When he looked, the Black Dragon King’s eyes widened fractionally.

Up in the air above him stood not just one person, but two! One old man and one young man!

The younger male stood up in the air, his dark-purple robes billowing gracefully with the wind to accentuate his dignified bearing.

Standing behind him was a white-haired elderly man, but his cloak covered his face so it couldn’t be recognized.

The Black Dragon King’s eyes widened again; he knew who that old man was. Practically besides himself, he spoke up in sadness,

“It’s....it’s you, Qin Bangjie....”

He and this man had met before!

The old man looked at him again, a voice speaking out from the black robes, “It’s been a very long time, Black Dragon King....”

“Indeed. Sixty years, has it? I never thought you’d be able to become a peak late-stage Soul King. A Soul Emperor is within your grasp now.....” The Black Dragon King spoke as though he was chatting with a friend.

“I remember my fight half a year ago had several men in black helping the Beast Taming School. They belonged to you, I presume? They were killed before they could use their true strength, and here you stand today, hiding your strength as well....

“Your cooperation with the Beast Taming School was within my expectations. Even if my true body died, I would still live on and wait....but never did I imagine that you’d know about my cloning ability. I had thought that there was no one in this world that knew my secret....”

His voice grew icy.

“But, do you really think that after I refused to form a soul contract with you sixty years ago, you can force me into agreeing to one now in my current state?!”

Qin Bangjie once sought him out sixty years ago in an attempt to form a soul contract with him, but the Black Dragon King refused.

Qin Bangjie didn’t press the issue and had even helped him kill a Soul King after him but the Black Dragon King remained hesitant. There was something Qin Bangjie was planning on, but he didn’t know what, so in the end, they remained only ‘acquaintances’.

“Black Dragon King, you misunderstand me.” Qin Bangjie spoke, “I came here today to accompany the young master, that’s all.”

“Young master?!”

His eyebrows flew up. Looking to the young man standing in front of Qin Bangjie, the Black Dragon King was gobsmacked. This young man had been standing there the entire time with only a smile on his face.

Returning the Black Dragon King's look with a warm smile of his own, the young man spoke, "I'm sure you understand the situation you're in today, Black Dragon King. Allow me to show you your two choices."

The Black Dragon King narrowed his eyes, but he remained silent.

"One, you die here and be erased from this world completely and utterly."

The young man smiled, his words chilling to the bones.

But before the Black Dragon King could speak up in anger, he continued on with his choices.

"Two, you form a soul contract with me."

"...."

The Black Dragon King's mouth snarled to give the young man a death glare, "You've guts, I'll tell you that much. Do you really think you can twist my hand like this?!"

"I'm sure you've already made your choice." The young man laughed.

"You are no longer the same Black Dragon King who once sowed destruction onto the world. Any passing Soul King could easily kill you as you are now. You need a patron, that is your best and most favorable option."

He paused for a moment.

"Furthermore, you misunderstand me. I'm not forcing you to do anything. I am not like the Beast Taming School....

"Our soul contract will be half and half. Aside from forming a

soul contract with me, you will remain the Black Dragon King and will experience no limitations. We will even help you to quickly restore your strength.”

“.....”

A look of impassivity crossed over onto the Black Dragon King's face now. His mind was filled with concern: he was at the complete mercy of these two people in front of him, and there was no leeway to make in the choices given to him.

If he refused, he'd die here....

As a proud and mighty being of the Eight Soulbeast Rulers, the Black Dragon King desired to live. After dying once, he wasn't keen on repeating the action.

“I've one condition.” The Black Dragon King spoke at last.

“Say it.”

“I want my Nephrite Throne back. With that, I'll be able to regain my strength very quickly.”

The young man smiled, “We've already dispatched someone to go grab it. That beast tamer Xing Yuan won't be able to find it....it won't be long before they return, in fact.

“But since you given up on the Nephrite Throne, it belongs to me now. If you want to train with it, I'll be happy to give it to you. I hope we're both clear on this.”

The Black Dragon King's mouth curled up to snarl, but he didn't say a word.

Something about this man frightened him.

From what Qin Bangjie was saying, everything seemed to be going to the tune of this young man's hand, from having him become a contracted soulbeast, his main body dying, and even using the Soul Refining School to do so....

.....

Now with this compromise, the Black Dragon King hadn't anything else to do but rise up into the skies to stand behind the young man silently.

As the three prepared to leave, Qin Bangjie suddenly drew in a sharp breath, looking to his west as he did.

Noticing his actions, the other two turned their heads as well. Just over a kilometer away, a streak of scarlet light was flying towards them, screeching as it did.

It was the palm-sized blood bat.

"A blood bat...." The Black Dragon King remarked, looking at Qin Bangjie. The blood bat was heading for him.

This must've been one of his soulbeast pets. Pet soulbeasts were not like contracted soulbeasts and could be raised like a normal pet by people as long as their intelligence wasn't too high. Many strong families and houses could arrange for soulbeast pets to be raised without much trouble, though they were rarely shown to others. Soulbeast pets were extremely convenient to use as scouts or messengers, and perhaps fighting.

Qin Bangjie's eyebrows were furrowed together when he noticed the blood bat coming for him, a strange look in his eyes.

There was another streak of red light coming for the blood bat!

"Bang!!"

When the blood bat finally ran out of strength, the red streak of light collided with the soulbeast, destroying it completely!

It had been the same blood bat Bai Yunfei fired at earlier, and that red streak of light had been the homing bullet fired off from his Flame Eagle!

The homing effect had no limits. As long as it had its target, the bullet would chase down its prey no matter where it went!

Qin Bangjie frowned. This was the soulbeast he sent out to

oversee the mission to take back the Nephrite Throne. It heading back alone and then dying meant that something unexpected had happened.

The young man's eyes were narrowed as well.

Suspicious, the Black Dragon King looked at the two, though on the inside, he didn't say a word.

After a long moment of silence.....

“Let's go.”

The young man finally broke the silence with those two words before leaving the two behind.

The Black Dragon King chose then to speak, “Ah, just who are you? Qin Bangjie said you were the ‘young master’, but can you be....”

Without even turning his head, the young man said.

“My name is Mo Ni.”

Chapter 457: Fragments of the Nephrite Throne

In the earlier half of the class six area of the Soulbeast Forest.

In a giant mountain that towered a kilometer over others, there could be seen a large cave.

The cave was dark, but by the entrance stood a giant wolf and a rather large prisma oriole sitting lazily on the side as if resting.

At a first look, only these two animals were there. But with a closer look, one would be able to make out the blurry figure of a person inside, but his aura was practically invisible.

Needless to say, the wolf and bird duo was the thunderfire wolf and Xiao Qi, and the person inside the cave was none other than Bai Yunfei. By using his Soul Concealment Art and the Walk-on Strawhat, he was able to hide his aura just enough so that any soul cultivator wouldn't be able to find it.

All they'd be able to see are two ordinary soulbeasts.

Bai Yunfei had been speeding along ever since he picked up all the fragments of the Nephrite Throne. Unwilling to venture any deeper into the class six area, he stopped halfway to hide in a cave and take a break.

From what his soulsense was telling him, there were only a few early-stage class six soulbeasts in this area, and that was it.

He shouldn't be in trouble here.

In truth, he had the Thunder Wolf King to thank for finding this cave. The direction he originally picked to follow would've taken him deeper into the forest, but when the Thunder Wolf King left, Bai Yunfei chose the opposite direction, which took him towards the outskirts.

Sitting crossed-legged on the ground of the cave, Bai Yunfei

started to circulate his soulforce around his body. This way, his wounds would heal and he'd have some time to think about several things.

One of those things was naturally the Nephrite Throne.

Back when the Nephrite Throne was shattered by that soul refiner, Bai Yunfei had felt his own heart shattering almost. Before he could even familiarize himself with this regalia, it broke. And that much was enough to drive him crazy.

But there was still something strange he noticed, making him take a second look at the fragments he gathered.

One of the larger pieces was currently in Bai Yunfei's hands to inspect.

Unique Equipment
Equipment Grade: High Earth
Elemental Affinity: None
Equipment Effect 1: Allow the successful upgrade of any equipment +10 and under once.
Equipment Effect 2: Increase the tier of an equipment when crafting by one (High Earth tier being the highest).
Cannot be upgraded

These are the stats of the Nephrite Throne fragment.

Even the fragments of the throne had stats!

Though he found that out a lot earlier, he didn't have much time to ruminate on it due to the soul refiner he had to fight. But now that the soul refiner was dead, Bai Yunfei had all the time in the world now to investigate the fragments.

With a turn of his hand, the fragment in his right hand was replaced with a fragment that had once been a part of the throne's base.

Equipment Grade: Low Heaven

Elemental Affinity: None
Equipment Effect 1: Allow the successful upgrade of any equipment +12 and under once.
Equipment Effect 2: Increase the tier of an equipment when crafting by one (Low Heaven tier being the highest).
Cannot be upgraded

His eyes shined brightly at this one. But not willing to say anything before every single fragment was looked at, Bai Yunfei took out another fragment.

Equipment Grade: Mid Heaven
Elemental Affinity: None
Equipment Effect 1: Allow the successful upgrade of any equipment +13 and under once.
Equipment Effect 2: Increase the tier of an equipment when crafting by one (Mid Heaven tier being the highest).
Cannot be upgraded

This one fragment was the largest of them with it being almost half of the entire backrest.

The light in Bai Yunfei’s eyes glistened even more.

.....

Equipment Grade: Low Heaven
Elemental Affinity: None
Equipment Effect 1: Allow the successful upgrade of any equipment +11 and under once.
Equipment Effect 2: Increase the tier of an equipment when crafting by one (Low Heaven tier being the highest).
Cannot be upgraded

.....

Equipment Grade: Mid Human
Elemental Affinity: None
Equipment Effect 1: Allow the successful upgrade of any equipment +6 and under once.

Equipment Effect 2: Increase the tier of an equipment when crafting by one (Mid Human tier being the highest).

Cannot be upgraded

.....

After a long time, each of the fragments had finally been studied by Bai Yunfei. There were about a hundred of these fragments with the smallest being only the size of a small marble.

“How strange! How does this work? Why does it work still?”

Puzzled by the fragments in front of him, Bai Yunfei muttered to himself with a wrinkle so heavy on his forehead that it almost seemed as though they were permanent features.

He really didn’t understand why there was such a change like this after the Nephrite Throne was shattered.

It seemed as though the Nephrite Throne had distributed its abilities into the fragments.

The destruction of a piece of equipment wasn’t rare to Bai Yunfei. He studied such cases before, but never had he had it turn out like this.

If a piece of equipment was destroyed by a failed upgrade attempt, it’d be reduced to dust and disappear forever. In the same line of events, if a piece of equipment—such as a stick—was broken by someone, the stats would still stay the same.

To be more specific, if the stick had an attack value of fifty, then it’d remain fifty after being evaluated again with the Equipment Upgrade Technique. Even the second half of the stick would retain the same value of fifty.

Swords were no exception to this rule. Should it be broken into two pieces, both halves would share the exact same attack value.

To extrapolate further on the matter, armor would also retain the same defensive value even if they were split apart. However,

the rule was different in more extreme cases. Robes were fine if they were split in two, but if they were split into many many pieces, their defensive values would potentially drop. And in some cases, the pieces wouldn't even show as having any stats at all.

In other words, they were no longer classified by the Equipment Upgrade Technique as being 'equipment'.

There existed another rule in this vein of things. If a sword had an additional effect and was broken in two, then only one half of it would have the effect and not the other. If the damage done to the piece of equipment was far too serious, then the effect would disappear entirely.

And that was only pertaining to the cases of armor and weapons. Bai Yunfei applied these rules before on accessories and such, and they had special findings of their own.

If a bracelet were to break, then it wouldn't have any stats at all and was basically a useless pile of junk.

.....

But today stood an exception to what Bai Yunfei used to call 'common sense'. The fragments of the throne had completely gone beyond what Bai Yunfei was confident about....

"I just don't get it...." Bai Yunfei muttered, "I experimented before on low tier equipment, but this never happened before. Is it because these are way higher in grade than what I used before?"

"Ah forget it. I won't get the answer by thinking about it. These 'results' in front of me are far more important."

Clearing his mind with a shake of the head, Bai Yunfei took one of the smaller fragments into his hand.

This one fragment had a slight deviation to the others....

Chapter 458: Guaranteed Upgrade Stones

This one fragment in Bai Yunfei’s hand was ovallish in shape and was two fingers wide and half an inch thick. Aside from the two holes on two sides of it, this fragment was almost perfect in shape like jade with several seemingly haphazard notches cut into it.

If the Black Dragon King was here, he would’ve recognized this piece straight away as being the ‘jade disk’; the piece of jade that was located at the central most part of the backrest and where all of the mysterious runic script originated from.

Equipment Grade: Low Heaven

Elemental Affinity: None

Equipment Effect: 60% increase in rate of cultivation.

Upgrade Requirement: 150 Soulpoints

His shock had reached a maximum when he first saw that effect—this fragment had been the only one that didn’t have to do with the ability to upgrade!

And even more interesting—this fragment could be upgraded!

He clutched this jade stone into his hand, breathing heavily in an attempt to calm himself down. Closing his eyes, Bai Yunfei tried to ease himself into tranquility.

“All the other fragments are responsible for the third and fourth additional effect of the Nephrite Throne, but this fragment was only able to ‘inherit’ the first additional effect and not the second one....” Bai Yunfei thought. “I wasn’t able to really look at the Nephrite Throne, so I’m not sure of the specifics. But this must’ve been from the backrest of the throne, why is it so different from the others?”

He studied the piece closely, making sure to memorize each of the finer details into his mind. Right now, an outline of the throne was weighing on his mind, and each of the fragments he had were

slowly filling in that outline.

“I definitely didn’t collect all of the pieces, and some of them were completely destroyed....” His eyebrows furrowed together. Bai Yunfei was sure that he didn’t have all of the pieces even after searching the entire area for them. Some pieces would’ve been far too small for his eyes to see, and he had been in a rush to leave too.

So roughly a third of the Nephrite Throne was completely lost to him, and so the backrest of the throne had its fair share of ‘gaps’....

“Did they....fall into the water?” He conjectured.

There had been a river not too far away from where Bai Yunfei was searching. Surely, some of the pieces had to have fallen into the water, and Bai Yunfei couldn’t have picked them up if they did.

The waters had been flowing far too fast for the fragments to anchor themselves into the waterbed. With their relative size and density, the river must’ve taken them far far away from Bai Yunfei, meaning they were lost to him.

“What a shame...”

It was with great pity that Bai Yunfei wrote off his losses. A great deal of the foundation was missing, many of these ‘Guaranteed Upgrade Stones’ surely would’ve been able to upgrade a +12 or +13 piece of equipment. And with some of the backrest missing, Bai Yunfei was sure there would’ve been some jade stones similar to this one that could’ve helped him train even faster.

‘Guaranteed Upgrade Stones’. That was the name Bai Yunfei came up for these fragments. Like Upgrade Stones, they could upgrade equipment, but they were also capable of allowing equipment to be upgraded without fear of failure. Like the Upgrade Stone given to him by Hai Dongqing—which had a higher chance of success than others—, these fragments were special in that they were guaranteed successes.

Bai Yunfei had a slight suspicion on why there might’ve been a

difference between the two stones, but they were merely suspicions and not facts.....

He put away the jade disk in favor of returning his attention to the many upgrade stones he had.

“Although the Nephrite Throne was destroyed, the stones left behind by it will still help me.....I can’t upgrade the Cataclysmic Seal anymore, but the other equipment have a chance now. Still hard to say if this is better or not, though.”

After giving it much thought, Bai Yunfei finally decided to categorize the new Guaranteed Upgrade Stones into mini-groups.

It went as following:

The amount of upgrade stones that guaranteed success for any equipment +13 and under and enhanced items up to mid-heaven tier: One

The amount of upgrade stones that guaranteed success for any equipment +12 and under and enhanced items up to low-heaven tier: Two

The amount of upgrade stones that guaranteed success for any equipment +11 and under and enhanced items up to low-heaven tier: Four

The amount of upgrade stones that guaranteed success for any equipment +10 and under and enhanced items up to high-earth tier: Eight

The rest of the upgrade stones were only capable of guaranteeing success of equipment +9, +8, and all the way to +3 were far too many for Bai Yunfei to bother categorizing.

Bai Yunfei was excited though. Aside from the smaller pieces, he had seven upgrade stones that were extremely useful to him, so useful that he felt like he was living a dream!

With these upgrade stones, he’d be able to upgrade any +10 piece

of equipment without fear of failing!

He had dreamed of having upgrade stones with these effects before, but this was a reality he never expected to come!

Still. He wasn't so happy that he'd use one of the more bigger upgrade stones. He'd start from the bottom first with the smallest.

Unique Equipment

Equipment Grade: Superior

Elemental Affinity: None

Equipment Effect 1: Allow the successful upgrade of any equipment +5 and under once.

Equipment Effect 2: Increase the tier of an equipment when crafting by one (Superior tier being the highest).

Cannot be upgraded.

These stones—while inherently useless—were still good fodder to fuel his research.

Taking out a golden blade in his left hand, Bai Yunfei looked down at the crack running through it.

This was the soul armament that soul refiner had used.

Equipment Grade: High Earth

Elemental Affinity: Metal

Attack: 1300

Upgrade Requirement: 110 Soulpoints

An ordinary soul armament that was only noticeable because it was a high-earth tier soul armament.

First upgrading it to +6, Bai Yunfei looked at it, and then to the upgrade stone in his hand. “Upgrade.”

He waited for the notification that'd ask for confirmation if he wanted to use the upgrade stone, but it never came.

“As I thought, I can't use the stone if it doesn't meet the requirements.”

This was the line that neatly divided the Guaranteed Upgrade Stones from the Upgrade Stones.

He took out a +8 Upgrade Stone and then looked back to the sword.

“Upgrade.”

Agreeing to the prompt, Bai Yunfei watched as the sword was upgraded to +7.

The first signs of deviation started when the upgrade stone transformed into white dust to be absorbed into the sword. The notification hadn’t even popped into his mind when Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows furrowed together.

“This sensation....” Bai Yunfei thought. Taking another +8 upgrade stone, he upgraded the sword to +8.

But this time, he eyed the sword intently while the upgrading process took place.

He had noticed something.

The sword was upgraded to +9.

He took out a +10 upgrade stone.

“Upgrade.”

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: High Earth
Elemental Affinity: Metal
Attack: 1300
Additional Attack: 600
Soul Compatibility: 10%
+10 Additional Effect: +500 additional attack
Upgrade Requirement: 110 Soulpoints

An unordinary +10 additional effect. Though the sword had gained enough strength to qualify it as a low-heaven tier soul

armament, Bai Yunfei wasn't paying any attention to that.

His eyes were closed, as if thinking about something.

Two minutes later, his eyes flew open.

Shining with a strange light, Bai Yunfei looked as though he had realized something.

“Time to upgrade even more!”

Putting away the sword, he replaced it with his Ardent Sun Gloves and took out a +11 upgrade stone....

Chapter 459: +12, +13, and Insights on Upgrading

Inspired by the sudden epiphany he had, Bai Yunfei took out the Ardent Sun Glove after having the previous short sword reach +10.

Thinking for another two seconds, he took out the +11 upgrade stone.

Equipment Grade: Low Heaven

Elemental Affinity: Fire

Upgrade Level: +10

Attack: 2236

Defense: 2580

Additional Attack: 1060

Additional Defense: 1215

Soul Compatibility: 16%

+10 Additional Effect: Summon a fireball with strength no greater than 50% of this equipment's attack.

Upgrade Requirement: 10 Soulpoints

At the time he upgraded this glove to +10, it had only 10% soul compatibility. With repeated usage though, Bai Yunfei was able to up that number by 6%.

“It sucks that I wasn’t able to refine my equipment when I became a Soul Exalt, otherwise, I would’ve had the chance to increase the soul compatibility even more....” sighed Bai Yunfei.

In the eyes of any crafter, the breakthrough to a higher level of cultivation meant another chance to increase the soul compatibility of one of their soul armaments. Many crafters intentionally stopped training when they were at the verge of becoming a Soul Exalt in order to increase the soul compatibility of their soulbound armament. That way, they’d get a stronger soul

armament.

Unfortunately for Bai Yunfei, he had completely forgotten about this chance when he was being chased by that thunderwing bat.

.....

“Upgrade.”

He used the upgrade stone without hesitation, it was time to upgrade the Ardent Sun Glove!

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Low Heaven

Elemental Affinity: Fire

Upgrade Level: +11

Attack: 2236

Defense: 2580

Additional Attack: 1600

Additional Defense: 1700

Soul Compatibility: 26%

+10 Additional Effect: Summon a fireball with strength no greater than 50% of this equipment's attack.

Upgrade Requirement: 160 Soulpoints

It took only a second to upgrade, but Bai Yunfei didn’t bother looking at the stats. What he was more focused on was the moment when the upgrade stone was absorbed into the glove. Meditating as he did, Bai Yunfei could distinctly feel the changes going on as the glove was absorbing the stone.

Since that process had only been a moment, much like the upgrading process, Bai Yunfei had only been able to further his theories and understandings by a single step. The Upgrade Stone was gone, but the Ardent Sun Glove was shining a faint shade of

red just barely brighter than what it was before.

“That’s not enough....again!!”

His eyes flew open a few moments later, his hand taking out a +12 upgrade stone this time!

“Upgrade!”

.....

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Low Heaven

Elemental Affinity: Fire

Upgrade Level: +12

Attack: 2236

Defense: 2580

Additional Attack: 2400

Additional Defense: 2600

Soul Compatibility: 40%

+10 Additional Effect: Summon a fireball with strength no greater than 50% of this equipment's attack.

+12 Additional Effect: Steal 10 points of the enemy's attributes (Strength, Spirit, Endurance, and Agility) up to 10 seconds. Cannot seal over 50% of the enemy's original attributes.

Upgrade Requirement: 160 Soulpoints

The upgrade was a success, though Bai Yunfei didn’t seem to care for the new +12 additional effect on it. Instead, his eyes were closed in order to focus on something.

His eyes opened again roughly ten minutes later. Blinking a few times, Bai Yunfei put a finger to his chin, “Hm....I think I’m starting to get it. It’s a little foggy though, why can’t I seem to understand it completely?

“Is it a problem with the soul compatibility?” He asked himself,

his eye still lingering on the glove. It had a 40% soul compatibility with him, and though that was relatively high, it wasn't enough to satisfy his curiosity.

“Should....should I try again?” The shadows of hesitation crossed over in his eyes.

“I can't just give up! This is my chance to finally understand this huge secret, I don't even know if I'll get this chance again!”

The Violet Soul Ring flashed once with light as the Fire-tipped Spear tumbled out onto his hand!

And then....a +13 upgrade stone came out with it!

He was going to upgrade the Fire-tipped Spear!

Clenching onto the spear with his right hand and the stone with his left, Bai Yunfei concentrated on the task at hand.

“Upgrade!”

“Bang!”

He didn't know if it was just him or not, but Bai Yunfei could've sworn he heard a small sound of some sort from the upgrade stone. Strange 'white smoke' started to pour out from the upgrade stone like water into a bucket before it was sucked straight into the spear!

In the next moment and under the watchful eyes of Bai Yunfei, his soulsense poured into his spear as well!

Two short seconds later, the white smoke had entirely disappeared into the spear, where shining red light started to pour out into the cave. Its glow felt warm to the skin and bright enough to perk the attention of Xiao Qi, who turned its head to look into the cave.

Though it was only two seconds that had passed, Bai Yunfei felt as though he was being ignored by the passage of time. Inexplicably, he felt estranged from it, with his soulsense being

strangely moved about in a strange space.

This space was familiar to him. Back when he first made the Fire-tipped Spear his soulbound armament, Bai Yunfei had the same sensation. And with the spear being his first soulbound armament, Bai Yunfei was extremely familiar with it. Each marking, notch, and material was no stranger to him, and nothing about it was unknown.

But right now, there was also a sensation he had never experienced before. In this familiar ‘space’, there was a deviation of sorts happening.

This was what Bai Yunfei was aiming for.

In order to soak in on this sensation, Bai Yunfei ignored everything else in the world to hone in with his senses. His eyes, mind, and soul were all focusing in on this strange deviation in order to divine something from it....

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: High Earth

Elemental Affinity: Fire

Upgrade Level: +13

Attack: 1380

Defense: 3200

Soul Compatibility: 88%

+10 Additional Effect: 20% chance to create an explosion with an attack of 150% of this equipment’s attack when stabbing.

Cooldown of 20 seconds.

+12 Additional Effect: Summon two doppelgangers with strength equivalent to 50% of the user’s total strength for up to 3 seconds.

Cooldown of 1 minute.

+13 Additional Effect: Expend half the user's soulforce to ignore any one elemental-based defense upon the next strike.

Cooldown of 10 minutes.

Upgrade Requirement: 110 Soulpoints

At last, a string of notifications started to stream into Bai Yunfei's head.

This time, Bai Yunfei didn't put away the spear without looking at the stats. He first looked at the 88% soul compatibility he had with it, and concentrated on the part of the spear he was holding onto. The pulsations from within the spear was slightly different than what he remembered.

One minute went by.

Then ten.

Half an hour...

The Fire-tipped Spear had long since fallen into its normal state, but Bai Yunfei remained still, unmoving, like a statue.

Another hour went by before Bai Yunfei opened his eyes, revelation clear to be seen in them.

"Is this how it works? I think I understand now...."

Chapter 460: A Deeper Study of the Upgrade Technique

The Equipment Upgrade Technique had never belonged to this world. Bai Yunfei didn't know about that at first, but that knowledge soon came to him when his mind started to incorporate the shattered memories of the transmigrator. It was with that transmigrator's knowledge that Bai Yunfei was able to learn that this was something from a 'game'.

Upon coming to this world, the transmigrator's memories fused with Bai Yunfei, and the imaginary 'skill' that had been made up in his world soon became a reality in Bai Yunfei's.

What was once strange to Bai Yunfei soon became normal as he familiarized himself with this strange technique. Soon, he came to call it a 'special skill' of his own, albeit one that he 'couldn't understand' or even 'hope to understand'.

Thus why he never bothered to understand it as a whole.

Then came his entry into the Crafting School. Due to the intricate relationship between the school and their studies in the art of crafting, Bai Yunfei gradually started to yearn the answers to the mystery that was the Upgrade Technique.

The answer he wanted wasn't about the rules of upgrading, or even the study of the effects, but....

How did upgrading work?

Yes, that was what he desired to know.

In the one instant the upgrading took place in, what exactly was going on to make it work?

The reforging and refinement of equipment was a type of 'skill' unique to the Crafting School. Embedding primal stones or soulgems onto a soul armament strengthened them, and even

infusing special materials had the possibility of enhancing a soul armament's power and even grade. Though possible, it required a series of complex procedures and compatibility between materials in order to work.

Even one of the secrets of the Crafting School, where a crafter was able to use the formation of their essence fireseed to refine one of their soul armaments and make it stronger had a basis in which the secret was formed upon.

But the Upgrade Technique....on what principle did that work upon?

It didn't have any prerequisites to be used aside from the consumption of soulforce. Compared to the sacred arts of the Crafting School, the Upgrade Technique was worlds apart in requisites, process, and results.

And that was without including the irregularity that was the additional effects.

In the course of the last two years spent, Bai Yunfei was without a doubt much stronger than before, and it was mainly in part thanks to the Upgrade Technique. By upgrading soul armaments, he had inevitably strengthened himself. Many a times, Bai Yunfei studied the finer details of the equipment after they were upgraded, and just as many times was spent trying to understand the sensations he felt during the process.

But no matter how many times he tried, it was all futile.

One thing he did know was the difference when he used an upgrade stone and when he didn't. In the times he used to the upgrade stones, his sense of clarity was a hundred times stronger during the upgrading process than when he didn't. He experienced this first hand back in Curopia City, though it was only for a moment so he wasn't able to pursue that. It also required all his brain power, and without the right frame of mind usually gained by training, Bai Yunfei wasn't able to make the best of it when he

tried.

Today changed that. Now that he had the upgrade stones formed by the fragments of the Nephrite Throne, his mind was able to clearly sense the finer details when the white smoke from the stone entered the equipment.

It was still a fleeting moment, but it was a longer moment than before. Bai Yunfei wasn't willing to give up that chance. After several repetitions with upgrading the Ardent Sun Glove via the +11 and +12 upgrade stones, Bai Yunfei was finally able to gleam some more knowledge.

But that wasn't enough for him, so he deigned to use the precious +13 upgrade stone!

Deciding on using the Fire-tipped Spear to be the item to be upgraded took a moment, but in the end, Bai Yunfei didn't regret his choice. The Fire-tipped Spear was his main weapon and was also one of his highest compatible weapons.

The +13 upgrade stone failed to disappoint. Via its usage, Bai Yunfei at last managed to understand the mystery that had eluded him for so long!

This was a first. He had never felt so understanding about the intricacies behind the Upgrade Technique, and surely, it'd benefit him for a very long time....

It was still early to say Bai Yunfei had mastered the Upgrade Technique, but he had finally did it. He was finally one step closer to knowing the vital secret behind the Upgrade Technique and the 'methodology' behind it.

Right now, Bai Yunfei wasn't sure what sort of thing he was researching, or even what kind of 'power' it was....

This 'power' was known as....the power of Law!!

The Planar Laws!

In his journey for the answers, Bai Yunfei had inadvertently stumbled upon such an awe-shocking discovery without even knowing!

.....

Bai Yunfei sighed, catching his breath as he tried to calm himself.

That feeling left in his mind wasn't something he fully understood, even now. But he had time. Before one learns to run, they must learn to walk.

And that would be what Bai Yunfei would do.

Now that his study was over, Bai Yunfei had the Ardent Sun Glove and Fire-tipped Spear in his hands to inspect.

The Fire-tipped Spear had reached a cumulative amount of four thousand attack points now that it was +13, meaning it was good enough to be called a mid-heaven tier soul armament! If Zi Jin saw the spear, he would've been absolutely floored! But Bai Yunfei was prepared to explain why his spear was so strong now, so he could worry about other things, such as the +13 additional effect.

"Ignore any elemental-based defense?" Inquired Bai Yunfei, this effect was....overpowered beyond belief!

Soul cultivators fought entirely with elemental energy as soon as they become a Soul Sprite and formed their origin essence. By harnessing the power of the elements, they could rely on that rather than physical prowess, whether it was in offense or defense.

They were even used to fight in long-ranged battles.

Through the power of a barrier powered by elemental energy, Bai Yunfei wouldn't even be able to shatter it if he unloaded every single bullet he had from his two Desert Eagles. The absolute coverage brought to soul cultivators by using the elements as 'armor' was without a doubt one of the most important aspects a soul cultivator should know, if not the most important.

And now, the Fire-tipped Spear had an effect that could completely ignore that said defense!

What did this mean?

It meant that in the face of an elemental barrier, the Fire-tipped Spear could go through it as if it didn't exist, no matter how strong the barrier was!

So excited were Bai Yunfei's eyes that they looked nearly bloodshot, reminding him to try and calm down a little.

"But the price for using this effect is huge! Using half my current soulforce...." Bai Yunfei mumbled, "Just using this effect means a sharp decline in my fighting ability. It doesn't even mean I'll be able to hit the enemy either. If I can't kill them in one blow with this, I'll be in danger."

Battles between Soul Exalts and higher made it very hard for a close-combat battle to open. More often than not, both soul cultivators would be fighting using long-ranged methods, and breaking through one's defense wasn't necessarily be-all and end-all. Unlike puppets whose movements would cease if their strings were cut, soul cultivators could retreat at any point they felt their lives were in danger.

"A risky gambit, that's what it is. But still, now I've another ace up my sleeves to kill with."

Smiling, Bai Yunfei put away the spear in favor of looking at the Ardent Sun Glove.

"Since the gloves were inherently better than the spear, it has better stats at +12 than the spear at +13.....and it has defense in addition to attack. With that, I'd be able to fight a low-heaven tier soul armament with just my gloved hand, probably with more ease than I think?" Bai Yunfei smiled happily as he looked at the stats.

"Stealing stats?! Another unbelievable effect!"

Stealing ten points of the opponent's attributes with each strike

was inconsequential, if not negligible. With Bai Yunfei's strength as an early-stage Soul Exalt, his basic attributes totalled to be around six thousand at the very least, so stealing ten from six thousand was a drop in the bucket.

But the important thing to know here was that the effect read as 'with each strike'. It could be stacked!

It was only for ten minutes and had a limit of fifty percent, but ten minutes was a very long amount of time in a battle of life or death! Many a things could happen in that time window, and exchanging several hundreds of blows during then was nothing strange.

If one blow represented ten points, and ten blows meant a hundred, then a hundred blows meant a thousand points! Even more importantly, Bai Yunfei had the Overlapping Wave Arts! An Eighty-one Fold Fist Force in the eyes of the Upgrade Technique meant 'eighty-one strikes'....

Equally as importantly was the fact that these points would be 'stolen'! It wasn't a debuff! Whatever the opponent lost, Bai Yunfei would gain!

To imagine just how great this was, if Bai Yunfei were to fight against a person who preferred to fight with his hands and legs, the outcome would surely benefit Bai Yunfei....

"What a shame that it only works in close-combat. If I can't hit the person, it's useless to me...."

As mighty as the effects were, the limits were also very clear to see.

But all in all, the two new effects Bai Yunfei picked up satisfied him. The profits he gained in less than a few minutes would raise his strength by several levels.

"Now then, let's take a look at this."

Bai Yunfei fished a white piece of jade about two fingers in width.

This was the piece of jade that could quicken the rate of training!

Closing his eyes, Bai Yunfei thought of a single word.

“Upgrade.”

Chapter 461: Luck

Upgrade Successful
Unique Equipment Equipment Grade: Low Heaven Elemental Affinity: None Upgrade Level: +1 Additional Attribute: +2 Luck Soul Compatibility: 1% Equipment Effect: 60% increase in rate of cultivation. Upgrade Requirement: 150 Soulpoints

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“.....”

Bai Yunfei’s hand clutched at the jade piece in his hand, his eyes frozen in place at what he saw.

“L—Luck?!” He uttered, not sure how to respond to this.

Strength, Stamina, Agility, and Spirit, those were the stats Bai Yunfei were familiar with, and even after countless accessories being upgraded by him and all sorts of strange additional effects, he never saw anyone outside these four attributes.

But today had saw to dropping a whole new ‘attribute’ for him.

Many a times, Bai Yunfei considered himself quite unlucky with the Upgrade Technique when it came to looking for good +10 additional effects. He even wished that his ‘luck’ would be better all those times!

If only he had a little bit more ‘luck’ to help him when upgrading!
And now, here it was, the luck he was looking for.

It seemed ever since he came across the Nephrite Throne, all of his ‘desires’ were being met.

For a very long time, Bai Yunfei could only stare at the jade piece in his hands.

“Luck, luck, luck, luck!! Is this really that kind of ‘luck’? Even something intangible like luck can be added?!”

His questions obviously had no man to tell him the answer to. But he didn’t doubt what the Upgrade Technique was telling him. After many years of using it, there was one thing he knew about it for sure.

The Upgrade Technique never lied with its stats!

Whilst Xiao Qi was still staring strangely at him, Bai Yunfei looked at the jade piece, trying his best to calm his heart.

“Upgrade!”

A moment later.

Upgrade Successful

Unique Equipment

Equipment Grade: Low Heaven

>Elemental Affinity: None

Upgrade Level: +10

Additional Attribute: +30 Luck

Soul Compatibility: 10%

Equipment Effect: 60% increase in rate of cultivation.

+10 Additional Effect: Double the chance of an equipment or additional effect activating.

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“For a low-heaven tier +10 item, adding only 30 points of luck is a little low, isn’t it?

“Does this mean that the ‘value’ of luck is weighed differently than for Strength, Spirit, and the other attributes? If this is a ‘special attribute’, I wonder what the standard is....”

The only thing he really knew about this ‘luck’ was its name, and nothing more. Though he had his suspicions, Bai Yunfei had no concrete answers, so he decided to delegate the question for a later time to focus on the +10 additional effect.

“Double the chance?” Bai Yunfei muttered with glee, “Is this also an effect brought by ‘luck’? How useful....”

If the words of the effect could be believed, then the probability of every single effect—meaning the Desert Eagle’s chance to double its attack, the Flameblade Bracer’s chance to absorb an attack, and the chance for the Cataclysmic Seal to activate the Flame Twister—would increase by a substantial number....

With this jade, Bai Yunfei’s strength had increased by a whole new level again.

Having such good equipment made Bai Yunfei giddy with the prospect of wearing it.

But then the logic of how to do that sobered him, “How would I wear this? Is it a type of accessory?”

Surely, this jade slip wouldn’t have any effect if he held it in his hand or slipped it into his robes. Should he wear it like a belt? That never seemed to work as a piece of ‘equipment’ before, though.

Taking out a golden piece of rope from his ring, Bai Yunfei slipped one end of it through the hole on the jade and turned it into a ‘pendant’.

He replaced the Cultivation Pendant with this one, allowing himself to feel washed with a strange sensation, thus telling him that the effect of the jade piece was in fact working.

“Well, I guess I’ll call this the Luck Pendant!” Bai Yunfei smiled to himself. Though the pendant had the ability to help him train even faster, it was also special in that it could raise his luck, thus the name.

Without any further use, the Cultivation Pendant was put away.

“Jackpot!” Bai Yunfei exhaled. “I really hit the jackpot this time!!”

Words couldn’t even describe the emotions Bai Yunfei was feeling right now. Today was the day of ‘luck’ and ‘profit’ for him, and the danger he went through to get it was completely worth it.

Looking at the remaining pile of upgrade stones, Bai Yunfei decided to continue upgrading another time. Today’s research was enough for him; he’d have enough time another day, especially with how many upgrade stones he had.

.....

Now that the problem with the Nephrite Throne was solved, Bai Yunfei clapped his hand to look at Xiao Qi and the thunderfire wolf.

“Come on in,” He called out to Xiao Qi.

The study he was conducting with the upgrade stones had piqued the curiosity from Xiao Qi. Even with all the strangeness that was going on, and the expressions on Bai Yunfei’s face, Xiao Qi didn’t disturb him.

But when it heard its name called, Xiao Qi flew straight over to Bai Yunfei while the wolf remained where it lay.

A small glint of light flickered across Bai Yunfei’s eyes, “Tell me, Xiao Qi. Can you control the thunderfire wolf? Or...are you able to use the Beast Taming Ring?”

.....

Bai Yunfei had come across an extremely strange situation when he was in the middle of battle with that soul refiner!

After he had killed Xing Yuan and stole control over the thunderfire wolf, Bai Yunfei had the wolf go help Xiao Qi fight the late-stage class six shadow vulture. Though it was a simple command, the thunderfire wolf would have trouble carrying it out.

He didn't feel any problems occur during the battle, however. The three soulbeasts were spectacular in their high-speed fight.

Bai Yunfei didn't really pay much attention to this at first, but then he realized....there was a connection between Xiao Qi and the thunderfire wolf!

It brought shock to him when he thought about it, but what shocked him first was when Xiao Qi had simply turned the shadow vulture's soulgem over to the thunderfire wolf!

It was then that Bai Yunfei felt that Xiao Qi was simply 'sharing' the spoils of war with it.

He didn't issue any commands to the wolf after that, but Xiao Qi and the wolf still came running over anyways, and the wolf was even ready to attack on Xiao Qi's command! That was made crystal clear to Bai Yunfei when the Thunder Wolf King came over and was 'resisted' against him.

That had been the clincher for Bai Yunfei, since he knew he definitely didn't issue a command for that.

So with those key events happening one after another, Bai Yunfei connected the dots and was able to come to one final conclusion.

Xiao Qi was able to use the Beast Taming Ring!

Chapter 462: A Change In the Thunderfire Wolf

Xiao Qi was able to use the Beast Taming Ring!

This conclusion was even more startling than the hints that preluded it, though Bai Yunfei didn't doubt it being true. When the blue-eyes wyrm was first here, it acted a little weirdly at times, especially when he himself was fighting. When Bai Yunfei wasn't controlling it, the wyrm would seem to fight in 'tandem' with Xiao Qi.

So Bai Yunfei decided to ask the question now that he was done with the Nephrite Throne problem.

Having not expected this question, the bird cocked its head first before nodding.

"It's real!!" Bai Yunfei was stunned.

It was far too strange of a situation to think about. The Beast Taming Ring was his soulbound armament, and when it was on a soulbeast, that meant its effect was active. So to have Xiao Qi able to use it without Bai Yunfei realizing it was an oddity Bai Yunfei previously thought impossible.

"Is it because Xiao Qi and I are connected via our souls? Or is it because the Beast Taming Ring was created using the eggshells from Xiao Qi? Both seem pretty plausible...."

The fact that another per—

That another bird was able to use his Beast Taming Ring wasn't worrying to Bai Yunfei. In fact, he felt quite glad about it. This meant he'd have less pressure to deal with in a battle.

At his command, the wolf flew to its feet and leapt into the cave where Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi were.

Xiao Qi was perched now on his shoulder while the wolf stood in

front of Bai Yunfei. No expression could be seen in its eyes, though a thick fog of red light was clouding its eyes from where it stood still. Listless, the wolf seemed more like an empty shell rather than a soulbeast.

Bai Yunfei knew a decent amount about the *modus operandi* of the Beast Taming School with how often he fought them. With the death of the beast tamer, the soulbeast would stay there, forgotten.

After he got the Beast Taming Ring, Bai Yunfei decided to try it out on the blue-eyes wyrm and study the results, though he never thought about ‘releasing’ it and thus never thought about using it as an experiment on actual soulbeast puppets.

The thunderfire wolf would be the second soulbeast he’d use the Beast Taming Ring, and it was by far a great different experience than to the blue-eyes wyrm.

There was no ‘resistance’ from the wolf.

From what Bai Yunfei saw from Hong Yin and his attempts to ‘communicate’, soulbeast puppets could be stored almost indefinitely inside special space rings where they were essentially in ‘suspended animation’.

They didn't need to do anything, and when let out, all these soulbeast puppets would do is eat when needed.

Aside from beast tamers, no one could prompt any sort of reaction from soulbeast puppets.

That is, until now.

The Beast Taming Ring was an aberration, a cheat of an equipment that could break the ‘ironclad’ rule of the Beast Taming School.

Using the Beast Taming Ring to get rid of the control over the wolf, Bai Yunfei didn’t feel anything from it. Slipping it back onto the wolf, he watched as it went into a state where it was ready to be commanded again.

If Bai Yunfei wanted to wrestle control over a soulbeast puppet, all he had to do was battle the beast tamer in a battle of spirit and will.

“This way, I can get rid of a beast tamer’s control over a soulbeast puppet with the Beast Taming Ring.....”

But the real question was asked right after, “But if I do that, what makes me different from them?!”

He had no good feelings for the Beast Taming School, but him stealing soulbeasts from them and then using them for himself would make him no better than the beast tamers.

And doing that would violate his own personal principles, so he wouldn’t.

“But these soulbeasts....what should I do about them?” Sighed Bai Yunfei, “If I had known the Thunder Wolf King would’ve taken the wolf, I would’ve let him....

“I wanted to pass off the soulbeast puppets to brother Hong Yin if I ever saw him, but I never did. Is he off in the class seven area?”

He laughed at that notion, the class six area had already claimed his life, would he really want to go into the class seven area knowing even more dangers existed there?

The Bloodhowl Mark was useful, Bai Yunfei conceded that much. But not everyone would buy into it. The day when his luck would run out would surely come, and he didn’t want to die in the forest like that.

Knowing not any other choice, Bai Yunfei shook his head and prepared himself to put away the thunderfire wolf. But when he gave the command, Xiao Qi suddenly chirped once.

“Eh?”

He turned to Xiao Qi, “What’s wrong? You want to stay with it?”

What Xiao Qi seemed to be getting at was that it didn’t want Bai

Yunfei to put the thunderfire wolf away.

“Chirp~!” It chirped before flying to come to a perch on top of the wolf’s head. In response, the wolf turned tail to return to the entrance of the cave where it could stand guard.

As it walked, Xiao Qi turned to give Bai Yunfei a look and as if to say, “Don’t worry, let me take over.”

“....”

Speechless, Bai Yunfei watched the bird and wolf walk away. He had the impression that Xiao Qi was starting to think of the wolf as a ‘younger brother’ of sorts.

But that didn’t really matter. The assistance of a peak late-stage class six soulbeast was reassuring, and he wasn’t like a beast tamer. He wouldn’t see the soulbeast puppet as a ‘tool’ to be used.

The sky was getting dark now, and the rain had finally ceased. With the clouds scattering apart, Bai Yunfei could see that night was clearly coming.

Stretching his back, Bai Yunfei sat down in a corner of the cave and began to rest.

.....

Early next morning, Bai Yunfei took off west with Xiao Qi and the wolf. With what just happened recently, they couldn’t afford to stay in one place for long.

For his safety, Bai Yunfei wanted out from the depths of the forest. He had spent enough time here and wanted to go west. He didn’t meet any soulbeast on the way, and so that left him with some leisure time to think about the Upgrade Technique.

The thunderfire wolf was now under the ‘guidance’ of Xiao Qi, and the two soulbeasts were basically moving like one. Any time they did meet a soulbeast, the two would fight together.

On the eve before the third day, Bai Yunfei was decided to use a

few of the +10 and under upgrade stones to get a better hang of the Upgrade Technique. Though he was doing some basic upgrading, he could still see some clues he hadn't before. And from these clues, he was starting to comprehend a little more about the 'origins' of the Upgrade Technique.

What benefits he got from there wasn't large, but it was worthwhile. The doors that had once been closed to him were starting to reveal the smallest of cracks to what lied beyond.

He couldn't see what that beyond was, but there would be a day where he would, and he was ready to face the answers.

On the afternoon of the fourth day.

Bai Yunfei found a small hilly area where an abundance of firewood was. Taking a few of them, he prepared himself a fire and started a barbeque.

As usual, Xiao Qi hopped excitedly on its tree branch above him. The only difference was that rather than a drooling blue-eyes wyrm, there was a monotonous wolf standing underneath.

Not too long later, the sweet smelling smell of meat wafted into the air. Tossing a finished slab to Xiao Qi, Bai Yunfei then tossed another to the wolf.

He had been accustomed to doing this. For the past few days, the thunderfire wolf was without awareness. Since it wasn't sleeping inside the ring, it still had to maintain the normal needs a living being required, and Bai Yunfei wasn't inclined to 'mistreat' it.

But then a second after he tossed the slab of meat, Bai Yunfei's eyes widened at what he saw next....

The thunderfire wolf leapt a meter straight up into the air to snag the slab thrown to it!

It was a normal action the thunderfire wolf was capable of doing, but only when ordered!

Bai Yunfei didn't give the order this time! And Xiao Qi was far too busy enjoying its own slab of meat to bother with the wolf, meaning....

The thunderfire wolf had moved by its own voluntary action!

“Wha....”

Chapter 463: Mutation in the Slave Seal!

The movements of the thunderfire wolf felt like a reactionary response. While this was normal in soulbeasts, it shouldn't be happening to the thunderfire wolf!

For the past few days, Xiao Qi had to 'order' the wolf to eat the slabs of meat placed in its mouth. If not, the wolf wouldn't have moved at all, so the fact that it did so readily by itself was surprising.

Observing the wolf a little longer, he noticed that the slab of meat was already almost fully devoured. Suspicious, he tossed another slab forward.

"Plop."

The piece of meat sailed past the wolf's nose, but it didn't move at all.

Not even an eye twitch.

"What?"

Bai Yunfei tossed another slab of meat. No reaction.

"Strange...." He remarked. Sending a command to the wolf, he had it start to eat the meat beneath it.

Nothing seemed wrong with it now. If he hadn't seen it earlier, Bai Yunfei would've dismissed its earliest actions as being a delusion.

Bai Yunfei finished eating first. Watching as Xiao Qi guided the wolf to lie down on the grass to sunbathe, Bai Yunfei's eyebrows narrowed together again.

He sat against a nearby tree trunk. Thinking for a long time, he decided to summon the wolf to him.

Reaching out to touch the wolf's forehead, Bai Yunfei sent his soulsense into it.

In an instant, Bai Yunfei felt his soulsense sucked into a strange ‘space’. He knew this to be the wolf’s mindspace, but it was different than to the mindspace of the blue-eyes wyrm. In that mindspace, the wyrm was clearly there, but in the wolf, there was nothing. Now that he was here, it felt like Bai Yunfei was the one only here.

If he fully concentrated, Bai Yunfei could feel like the thunderfire wolf was just another form of himself. He felt like he was the wolf.

Bai Yunfei felt a sliver of difference compared to the last time he entered the wolf’s mindspace. There was something he couldn’t exactly put his finger on in the form of a nearly indiscernible mist that didn’t seem to do anything but simply exist.

In that moment, Bai Yunfei was suddenly aware of a second presence in this mindspace. It was a presence he was very familiar with—Xiao Qi had entered the wolf’s mindspace. Xiao Qi’s presence was felt for only a moment before it left as soon as it entered.

It must’ve dove into the wolf’s mindspace to order it to do something, but when it felt Bai Yunfei was doing something, it decided to leave.

He didn’t mind its intrusion. His soulsense continued to scour the wolf’s body inch by inch, muscle by muscle, and see if it would respond to anything.

This was the very first time he ‘studied’ the thunderfire wolf. But in the end, Bai Yunfei didn’t really notice anything special. The thunderfire wolf was simply there and was empty like a tool. There was no ‘consciousness’.

Disappointed with the fruitlessness of his attempt, Bai Yunfei decided to give up on that aspect. Withdrawing his soulsense, he dove into a more particular part of the wolf’s body—the soulgem.

.....

The soulgem of a soulbeast had uses similar to that of an origin essence in a soul cultivator, only that its applications were far greater. It served as a second heart to the soulbeast—a far more important one at that. It was a crystallization of the soulbeast's soulforce, elemental energy, and training.

The origin essence is something that is formed inside a soul cultivator after their birth. It could die out, it could be reformed, and it could even be detached from the body for a short period of time, but a soulgem was far more restrictive.

A soulgem came with the birth of a soulbeast. There is only one, and it can only exist inside the soulbeast's body. In the case of its removal, the soulbeast will inevitably die.

The soul of a soul cultivator is something that could be honed and trained. Despite their nominative name, many soul cultivators would probably be unable to truly explain what a soul was, or even where it 'resided'. They knew that it existed, and they could even feel it, but that feeling was merely just a feeling.

The soul of a soulbeast existed inside the soulgem. In some cases, there were accounts of some soulbeasts being able to live on in their soulgems following the death of their physical body. But these cases were few and far in between, and no low-leveled soulbeast would be able to do that. In the case that the soul did live on, they were without a conscious. Without sentience. They were nothing more but a crystallized form of data.

In cases such that similar to Bai Yunfei where he received several soul fragments, they'd be able to read and understand the memories left behind in them, but the fragments were no longer sentient.

In these soulgems, the souls left behind in them were mainly filled with the many culminations the soulbeast had about cultivation or the power of the elements. By obtaining a soulgem, one could absorb the soulgem into their body and reap an

enormous amount of power and understand these ‘insights’. To do so was in a way, cheating, but it really was a great benefit to the one who absorbed one.

For that reason, soul cultivators all over the continent hunted down soulbeasts. The opportunity to obtain and absorb a class six or higher soulgem would’ve caused no small stir in the community.

.....

In time, Bai Yunfei came eye-to-eye with what appeared to be a fist-sized soulgem. Wave after wave of soulforce and elemental energy pulsed out from the center of the soulgem.

The soulgem of a soulbeast was normally not an object that could be touched by any human. But in a few special cases, such as with the blue-eyes wyrm, Bai Yunfei had the chance to observe it.

There had been resistance that stopped him, however! It had been such great resistance that the Beast Taming Ring had nearly failed several times, forcing Bai Yunfei to drop his attempts.

But this time, the thunderfire wolf was offering up no resistance; almost as if it didn’t even notice Bai Yunfei.

The moment Bai Yunfei tried to probe the soulgem with his soulforce, did he finally meet an obstruction.

It wasn’t the wolf that was causing it, but an unknown energy of some sort.

The energy from a seal.

“Is this the ‘slave seal’ of the Beast Taming School?” He guessed.

Everyone knew that beast tamers branded the slave seal onto a soulbeast in order to control them. This way, the slave seal was the engine that put the machine into motion.

From what Bai Yunfei could sense, the mysterious energy that was stopping him from accessing the wolf’s soulgem was a lock

that stopped any foreign probes and sealed away the wolf's soul.

Trying again, this time stronger, Bai Yunfei 'saw' a mysterious but complex pattern appear. It didn't move from its spot, but the markings themselves were pulsating mysteriously.

Following a brief moment of hesitation, Bai Yunfei decided to go ahead and 'analyze' the slave seal to see what it was made of.

But this seemingly innocent action had sparked an extremely large fire!

The moment his soulsense touched upon the slave seal and the pattern that made up the seal, Bai Yunfei was hit with a volatile reaction that sent him whirling! Retreating, Bai Yunfei watched as the seal start to warp in on itself and....start to disintegrate!!

It was all without warning. Bai Yunfei had barely gasped before the seal started to deteriorate. Trying to leave from the mindspace, Bai Yunfei was shocked to realize that he couldn't, he couldn't retreat!

What is soulsense? An intangible piece of existence that was superior to soulforce. It is the mixture of soulforce and will to form outside the body as a type of 'presence'. The soul wouldn't be hurt if the soulsense was destroyed, but it would still hamper the soul cultivator as a whole.

Bai Yunfei had supplied a decent amount of soulsense into the wolf's mindspace when he first entered. Just the thought of half his soulsense being destroyed left Bai Yunfei in cold sweat.

As if to press Bai Yunfei even more, the situation was unraveling faster and more violently than before.

The slave seal was like a maelstrom of energy, with bits and pieces of soulsense being slung everywhere, trying to take in the rest of Bai Yunfei's soulsense into it!

If the rest of his soulsense was absorbed, then Bai Yunfei would definitely lose consciousness! And to do that here would be

disastrous, even Bai Yunfei didn't know the consequences of that.

Thankfully for Bai Yunfei, his reactions were quick. He tried pulling his soulsense away from the 'maelstrom', and though the maelstrom had a tremendous force of attraction, Bai Yunfei was finally able to propel himself away from the soulgem, but not completely out.

Just as he was considering the best way to deal with this problem, the slave seal started to mutate again!

Energy exploded like from a volcano from the slave seal....and it was starting to crumble even faster!

The crumbling of the slave seal seemed like the signal for something else in the wolf's soulgem. Starting to tremble, a large amount of soulforce and elemental energy was pushed out from it while an ominous air started to descend....

It was....self-destructing!!

Chapter 464: The Crumbling of the Slave Seal and the Self Destruction of the Soulgem!

The art of soulbeast puppetry has long since been a secret. An enigma that no outsider had ever learned the intricacies about. Even the students of the Beast Taming School knew only the ways of manipulation and control. They knew not the deeper secrets, and certainly never had they heard about a way to undo said methods.

In other words, it didn't exist.

That didn't mean to say there weren't people that tried. Undoing the slave seals put onto soulbeasts had been studied for ages, but not a single person was able to find a way, human or soulbeast.

There was a reason for this. The slave seal could...not be 'touched'!

No matter how strong one was, even a Soul King wasn't able to try and 'analyze' the slave seal!

To come into contact with the slave seal meant only one outcome:

The destruction of the slave seal and the death of the soulbeast!

The slave seal had no leeway and had no second chances! Even a class seven soulbeast puppet would have its soulgem blown up if its slave seal unraveled.

Just like the process of self-destruction, if the slave seal unraveled, the destruction was near instantaneous and thorough.

Either way. The amount of soul cultivators that wanted to study the slave seal and the amount of soulbeasts that detonated was immeasurable.

.....

Unfortunately for Bai Yunfei, he didn't know that.

His actions today had inadvertently activated this 'mechanism' and plunged the three of them into danger!

Light started to emit from the soulgem inside the thunderfire wolf. Shaking, its entire body started to feel the pressure that came with the unraveling of its slave seal. A terrifying amount of energy was being let loose, and its body was expanding now with the threat of blowing up.

From its perch on the tree, Xiao Qi's head snapped up in shock. From what it could see, Bai Yunfei had his hand on top of the wolf's head while purple and red light was shining out from it so that both were submerged inside of it. All of the elemental lightning and fire from the wolf was starting to swirl around the wolf and spasming violently as if threatening to explode.

Inside the wolf's mindspace, Bai Yunfei's soulsense was a little far from the soulgem. Seeing what was about to happen, Bai Yunfei felt himself faint and nearly ready to actually do the fainting!

Two options floated into his mind.

Stop it, or run away.

He had to choose quick.

So Bai Yunfei choose to stop it!

If he chose to run away, that'd be the same as abandoning the thunderfire wolf and watch it blow up. It was futile to try and run anyways. The explosion of a peak late-stage class six soulgem would certainly be a force that Bai Yunfei wouldn't be able to defend himself from.

There was no way of him knowing the soulgem's explosion was unstoppable, of course. He had never experienced this before, and the self-destruction he experienced with the eagle back in Gaoyi City was a different story. At that time, the eagle's self-destruction was caused by its beast tamer. But this explosion was a self-

destruct defense mechanism implanted in the slave seal and was on a whole new level.

He didn't have the time to think about that. Biting his teeth, Bai Yunfei urged his soulforce to aid his soulsense into storming the slave seal before it could fully collapse!

He felt elated for a split-moment. As soon as his soulsense entered the slave seal, the crumbling started to slow down a bit!

But it was only by a bit. His soulsense was then dragged into the 'maelstrom' and torn apart as the soulgem's self-destruction regained pace. It couldn't be fully stopped and would explode in a few more seconds!

"That's not enough!!"

Snarling, Bai Yunfei pressed soulforce into the Beast Taming Ring around the wolf's throat this time. Energy started to spill out from it, but the tremors from the wolf only grew worse! In its eyes, a rarely seen light of resistance could be seen, and the soulgem's self-destruction suddenly dipped in intensity!

"It's working!!"

Renewed in hope, Bai Yunfei forced even more soulforce into the Beast Taming Ring in an attempt to curb the soulgem's destruction.

Never had a scene like this ever happened before. No beast tamer was silly enough to try and touch the slave seal in case it self-destructed. Anyone that tried to do so were always from outside the school and were often people that were trying to steal the soulbeast puppet away. But each study would always lead to this same result of self-destruction.

Many would try to stop the process. Those strong enough could reduce the process by a decent amount, but never completely. What they did was merely delay the inevitable.

But Bai Yunfei was special in that he was using the Beast Taming

Ring to fully control the thunderfire wolf! Beast tamers used the slave seal to command the soulbeast, but Bai Yunfei didn't need to! Perhaps the slave seal wouldn't be stopped, but the soulgem stood a chance of surviving!

A case of extraordinary circumstances, that was what this was. The destruction of the slave seal and soulgem happens at the same time and normally couldn't be stopped.

....The situation with the flash eagle back in Gaoyi City was a different matter.

Even if the headmaster of the Beast Taming School were to come, even he'd be unable to prevent the wolf from self-destructing, and neither would he believe it possible.

While useful, the Beast Taming Ring wasn't able to fully contain and remove the danger!

Bai Yunfei's mind and soul was completely dedicated to controlling the Beast Taming Ring. Through that as a medium, his soulforce was able to crawl into the wolf's mindspace to contest over the soulgem with another energy. One side was ordering it to explode, the other side was ordering it to stop.

But the self-destructing process was only getting stronger and stronger. In time, the power would overwhelm the Beast Taming Ring and lead to the wolf's self-destruction!

Nerves reheightened with the danger, Bai Yunfei poured even more soulforce into the ring, his forehead slick with sweat.

From the side, the hurried chirping of a bird could be heard in his ears. In the wolf's mindspace, the sudden intrusion of another party of soulforce made itself known! Pausing briefly when it felt what was going on, it immediately started to pour its energy into the Beast Taming Ring to stop the self-destruction sequence as well!

It was Xiao Qi!

Like a god descending upon the earth, Xiao Qi's arrival had brought wonders to the situation! The trembles in the wolf's body was already lessening by a substantial margin, and the soulgem suddenly halted!

In a flash, the situation had come to a pause. For several short minutes, the crumbling slave seal could be 'seen'. Though incomplete, it was visible for Bai Yunfei to look at.

Then the soulgem started to shake again as elemental fire and lightning splashed about. Whether it was his soul or body, Bai Yunfei felt the two energies slam into his mindspace like a piece of driftwood accosted by a storm.

He wouldn't be able to continue if this lasted any longer! As long as the elemental energy around him subsided, he could continue to force the soulgem to halt its self-destruction!

"Damn damnit damnit!" Bai Yunfei cursed up a storm. His eyes were bloodshot from fear and exertion, but determination was clearly visible in them!

"Try and flood me out, I'll just suck it all up!"

"Bang!"

A layer of fire appeared around Bai Yunfei's body. Churling wildly, it took in the near-endless stream of elemental fire and took it into his own body!

But the thunderfire wolf wasn't capable of only emitting elemental fire. It had another element, and that one was throwing chaos into the mixture!

As he sucked up the elemental fire, his layer of fire was also taking in the elemental lightning!

Chapter 465: Essence Lightningseed

Under these circumstances, Bai Yunfei couldn't afford not to take in the elemental fire. It was dangerous, to be sure, and it certainly wasn't purely elemental fire. Due to bi-elemental nature of the wolf, it's elemental fire was a very different substance than to what Bai Yunfei's was, meaning it was exceedingly dangerous to absorb.

Taking in the elemental fire, Bai Yunfei felt his fireseed start to tremble, as if trying to reject the elemental fire. Forcing him to stop the repulsion, Bai Yunfei had the fireseed try and fuse the foreign elemental fire with his own.

But to do that caused a great deal of chaos and....pain.

Fire hot enough to burn even his heart came to being inside his body. Bai Yunfei was 'accustomed' to such pain, as he felt this same pain before when training in the Dual Flame Arts, so Bai Yunfei could grit his teeth and continue onwards without being too hampered.

The truly dangerous element in this situation was the fact that he wasn't just absorbing elemental fire into his body.

He was absorbing elemental lightning as well.

Experiencing what felt like tendrils of lightning snake into his body and spark every centimeter of his nerves, Bai Yunfei felt his body grow numb to the touch. And combined with the burning sensation going on at the same time, his pain multiplied.

The amount of perspiration starting to form on his body grew in proportion to the amount of seconds. Not a single droplet had fallen yet, but they were hot to the touch, and several parts of his body was starting to 'steam'.

Everything was going beyond Bai Yunfei's expectations. Not even a second of break was given as Bai Yunfei was pushed deeper into

his conundrum without being able to think about it. The only thing he could rely on was his own instincts, and that was what he was doing in order to try and get through this.

Controlling the wolf and taking in the elemental energy was proving it hard for Bai Yunfei to think about anything else. He didn't even have the time or ability to take the Cataclysmic Seal out and have the fireseed in that try and alleviate some of his pain.

But what he was already doing was enough to suffice. The torrent of elemental energy was reaching a calm, and combined with his efforts with Xiao Qi, the situation was starting to get better.

Several seconds went by in reality, but to Bai Yunfei, these seconds were practically eons. Elemental fire and lightning was running rampant in his body and surging through his veins; though the fire he was used to, the lightning was moving like snakes underneath his skin, wriggling here and there and making for a scary sight.

Only a third of the seal was left. But the energy pouring out from it was still growing in momentum in its attempt to blow up the soulgem.

Like Bai Yunfei, Xiao Qi was hard at work trying to stop the self-destructive process. Bai Yunfei had even felt a message from the bird asking asking him to focus on absorbing the elemental energy while it focused on stopping the soulgem from exploding by itself.

But why would Bai Yunfei do that?

While it was true that Xiao Qi's current strength of soul was stronger than his, it was only because Bai Yunfei had already allocated most of it as soulsense to control the Beast Taming Ring!! If Bai Yunfei were to relegate the task to Xiao Qi, they might be able to truly do something. But if the explosion were to happen while Xiao Qi was the only one controlling the Beast Taming Ring, then its soulsense would be thoroughly wiped out!

And should that happen....Xiao Qi would have its soul wiped out!

“Damnit! I have to endure this!!” Bai Yunfei roared to himself, pouring some more of his soul into it!

He wasn't using soulforce or soulsense this time, but the raw energy that originated from his soul! It was his soul that he was using!

It streamed out from Bai Yunfei and into the wolf's mindspace. Without any obstructions, Bai Yunfei's soul traveled into the wolf's soulgem!

A while ago when the slave seal had lost half of its integral structure, a small 'crack' had formed on the soulgem. Continuing with the collapse of the slave seal, the crack had only grown wider. And behind it was....where the wolf's soul was!

As his soul entered this spot, a peculiar feeling suddenly registered to his mind. There was a faint existence within the vicinity of his soul. It was weak and hard to detect, but it was there for Bai Yunfei to see. He had felt this feeling many times before, it was the feeling of comprehension. Insights into the world and its elements.

His eyes glimmered with light as the insights touched him. In the next moment, his absorption rate of the elemental energy around him rose drastically!

Straight away, the previously volatile energy grew 'docile', as if Bai Yunfei had discovered a way to properly control it.

But that wasn't enough. The slave seal was already in the most extreme phase of its self-destruction, and the energy that was coming out from the interior of the wolf's body was just as explosive. Bai Yunfei's soul entering the soulgem left Xiao Qi the only one there to control the Beast Taming Ring, meaning the force pushing for the wolf's soulgem to explode had grown stronger!

He still had one final attempt to try out. There was a reason why he had his soul surge into the wolf's soulgem.....

The elemental fire and lightning he was absorbing both had one destination. No matter where it entered his body from, the two energies had only one place to go to.

The center of his body where the origin acupoint was!

Obediently, the elemental fire flowed into the acupoint and joined with the essence fireseed there.

As for the elemental lightning, it started to gather around itself and form a small sliver of 'concentrated' purple lightning.

This was....an essence lightningseed!

Somehow, Bai Yunfei was trying to form an essence lightningseed!

Insane.

That was the only word that could describe this action.

And yet, it was also the best method to handle this situation!

The lightningseed was in an embryonic state of being, but with the rate of absorption Bai Yunfei had, it was already growing by several magnitudes!

“Chirp!!!!”

A chirp from Xiao Qi signalled to Bai Yunfei, telling him that it knew what he was doing and was trying its best to work the Beast Taming Ring. Though it couldn't help him absorb the elemental lightning, there was still the 'connection' it had with Bai Yunfei, the soul contract!

Xiao Qi had an affinity for both fire and lightning as well!

Despite its relatively shorter time spent training in understanding the elements, Xiao Qi had something that was different than experience.

It had instinct!

Light blossomed from both Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi. This was the result of their soul contract, allowing for a connection between the two and to have Xiao Qi share what insights it had about the two elements to Bai Yunfei. Knowledge and understanding poured forth from Xiao Qi's mind into Bai Yunfei, and once again, Bai Yunfei began to absorb the elemental energy faster than before!

Bai Yunfei's body became the eye of a whirlpool, with his body being a bottomless pit for the elemental fire and lightning to go into and be absorbed!

The events that was happening between Bai Yunfei, Xiao Qi, and the thunderfire wolf was something no one could possibly understand or even attempt to talk about if they ever saw it!

Time had almost no meaning to the two now. Bai Yunfei could still 'see' the slave seal crumbling away bit by bit, and as he absorbed the elements, he took notice of the slave seal having only a quarter of it left.

Then a fifth of it.

And then a tenth....

The essence fireseed in his body continued to absorb the special elemental fire from the wolf, swelling in size as it was fed. Right by its side, the embryonic essence lightningseed was already gaining in mass to form the shape of a lightning bolt.

A cloud of elemental fire and lightning covered the hill Bai Yunfei, Xiao Qi, and the thunderfire wolf was in, making it impossible for the naked eye to see in or out of it. All anyone could see if they looked was a tumultuous influx of energy and nothing else.

In time, the air of death that once threatened Bai Yunfei started to clear up....

Chapter 466: Companion Lightningseed

The disastrous event caused by Bai Yunfei was reaching a calm now. With Xiao Qi's assistance, Bai Yunfei was able to lull the tempest that was the wolf's elemental energy so that it wasn't as chaotic as before.

Finally, the destruction of the slave seal reached its conclusion. It was gone without a trace.

Xiao Qi was still controlling the wolf via the Beast Taming Ring, and Bai Yunfei was still concentrating on absorbing any rampant elemental energy coming out from its soulgem into his own body.

After the slave seal collapsed, Xiao Qi became the dominant owner of the wolf's mindspace. The Beast Taming Ring flashed once with light in recognition of this, putting a stop to the energy coming out from the wolf's soulgem. Though horribly damaged, the soulgem was no longer exporting enough energy to destabilize it any further.

He couldn't afford to be negligent still. Though no new energy was being exported, Bai Yunfei still had to fully absorb the elemental energy still there in the area. He was tired, and his eyes blood-shot, but there was still work to do.

Bai Yunfei was at his limit. Despite his willingness, the amount of elemental energy was almost too much for him....

While the crisis with the thunderfire wolf was over, he couldn't relax. In fact, the situation was a lot scarier for him now that his organs were all screaming in pain from his toil and labor. Spasmodic twitches were happening all over his body and small sparks of purple lightning was sparking from his skin as if threatening to set him on fire.

The elemental fire and lightning he was absorbing wasn't something his own body made, and neither was it something the

world had supplied. It was from the peak late-stage class six thunderfire wolf! How could its energy not be so powerful!

Any ordinary early-stage Soul Exalt would've long since combusted and died if they tried absorbing all this energy. But Bai Yunfei was anything but 'normal'. With his abilities, he was able to endure the pain and continue to absorb it.

What Bai Yunfei was doing was foolhardy at best and suicidal at worse. To any soul cultivator, his actions were the actions of an idiot. Like entering the tiger's cave or slapping a dog with a meat bun, these two things were simply not to be done. Bai Yunfei may as well dressed his soul up with a ribbon to deliver to the wolf to eat.

But the wolf was doing nothing in this case. It held no sentience, and it offered no resistance when Bai Yunfei's soul tried to enter its soulgem.

In fact, the wolf was allowing Bai Yunfei to 'steal' the insights it had on elemental fire and lightning!

The act of sending their soul into the soulbeast stronger than them was impossible for anyone to do. Even beast tamers couldn't, with or without the slave seal.

A Soul King could 'impose' their souls onto a class three or four soulbeast's soul, but what was the point in that?

Another factor that couldn't be ignored was Xiao Qi. Whether it was the bird itself or its usage of the Beast Taming Ring, Xiao Qi had supplied a plethora of wealth to Bai Yunfei via their soul contract.

Although Bai Yunfei looked like he was on the verge of exploding, the rampant energy around him was no longer there, meaning he didn't have to worry about the pressure anymore. Pulling his soul out from the wolf's mindspace at the same time his left hand pulled away from its head.

Sitting down on the ground, Bai Yunfei began to focus on the elemental energy inside his body.

What was normally a simplistic series of actions gave Bai Yunfei a great deal of pain. Each movement gave him great agony, and his body seemed to be peeling away in places....

Not too far away, Xiao Qi was lying on top of a rather large tree branch and slowing breathing in and out. There was joy in its eyes when it was able to order the wolf to walk a short distance away from Bai Yunfei. Having it stand guard over them, Xiao Qi curled up and began to recover its energy.

.....

It was only midday, but the matters Bai Yunfei faced so far had been deadly enough to last a while. Ten minutes had gone by since Bai Yunfei first sat down, but nothing had really changed since then.

And just like that, time trickled by so that day turned to night, and the sun turned to moon.

Motionless like a statue, Bai Yunfei sat underneath a tree with his body shining both scarlet and purple. The elemental energy around his body was surprisingly normal, and the expression on his face was getting better with each passing moment. But still, the echoes of pain was still there, and the physical marks left behind by his ordeals had yet to fully heal....

Night turned into day, and day into night once again.

Bai Yunfei had been stuck healing for an entire day!

On the afternoon of the third day, the wounds on Bai Yunfei seemed all but gone. His facial expression was normal, the ring of fire around his body gentle, and just barely a hint of purple in that redness.

Inside Bai Yunfei's body, his fireseed essence was noticeably larger than before, and a small 'purple snake' was wriggling

around it, looking like a bolt of lightning.

It was a essence lightningseed!

But this lightningseed looked a little special....

At last, Bai Yunfei's body had fully absorbed the elemental energy outside of it, allowing him to open his eyes at last.

A spark of fire glistened to life in his eyes, a spark of purple hidden in it. It disappeared right after, returning his eyes back to normal.

Huffing in relief, Bai Yunfei bent his head down to look at his body with no small amount of joy....

"I nearly lost my life there...." He sighed. His heart skipped a beat when he thought about just how close he was to losing his life.

"For real, that was a super dangerous spot I was in. The slave seal is quite scary. Why do I always have to be stuck in these type of situations? Am I too reckless? I shouldn't have tried to take a look at the seal....

"But it's a good thing I've luck on my side to deliver me from danger." He clutched at the Luck Pendant hanging over his chest, "Me barely escaping from danger has been happening far too many times, but I've been profiting quite a bit."

He smiled. Snapping his right hand, a small flame burst into life on top of his palm. Warm to the touch and dancing slightly with the wind, the fires had a touch of purple light swimming in it.

Elemental lightning!

There was elemental lightning inside the flame!

"I'm a little early training in a second element, but I didn't really have any other choice. But that's not really a bad thing...." Bai Yunfei thought to himself, watching as the fire danced on his palm.

"This isn't a true essence lightningseed, so I don't need to bother

putting too much focus on it, and neither should it impact my training in elemental fire. But I wonder if this'll bring me any sort of trouble....”

The lightningseed in his body wasn't a true essence lightningseed! It was incomplete, meaning it was similar to what the Crafting School called a 'companion fireseed'!

Chapter 467: A Change in the Thunderfire Wolf

“A ‘companion lightningseed’, is it?” he smirked, “I shouldn’t have any problems with it, besides not being able to train with a companion fireseed like the Dual Flame Arts talks about. But I’ve a feeling that there won’t be a problem with one elemental overshadowing the other, and that I’ll be able to use a new method.”

When Bai Yunfei was first absorbing all of the elemental energy coming out from the wolf, he didn’t bother to fully form an essence lightningseed, and neither did he bother to absorb any other element. Not only was he unable to take in any element other than fire and lightning, Bai Yunfei had a plan.

He’d form an incomplete essence seed so that it’d form a ‘close’ connection with his elemental fire. If he could have lightning and fire become close with one another, he’d be able to form a companion seed!

And to his great joy, it succeeded!

Having a companion lightningseed meant he was able to use elemental lightning. It’d be comparatively weaker to if he had a complete essence lightningseed, but on the other hand....his elemental fire would be imbued with elemental lightning and would grow even stronger!

On a side note. This also meant he wouldn’t need to have an ‘ammo clip’ for his Lightning Eagle anymore....

“But...” A problem occurred to Bai Yunfei as he thought about the companion lightningseed. Waving his hand, the Cataclysmic Seal appeared in front of him. With another wave, the essence fireseed inside it floated out.

In normal times, this essence fireseed was placed in the

Cataclysmic Seal. Compared to the second one in him, this one was the first one he had, and was much 'older'. When he failed to form a second fireseed back in the Crafting School, the Cataclysmic Seal was there to absorb all of the elemental fire there. With all the elemental fire, his first essence fireseed grew a lot stronger and bonded quite a bit with the Cataclysmic Seal. After the second fireseed was born, it was weaker. Not so weak that it'd impact him, but there was a very definite gap between the two. Thus, Bai Yunfei decided to keep the second one in his body to help it grow bit by bit and hopefully get the two fireseeds to an equilibrium.

And now, the second fireseed had absorbed a great deal of elemental lightning from the thunderfire wolf and grew stronger in the process. The more important thing was that he now had a companion lightningseed. But the real question was if it'd impact him in his training of the Dual Flame Arts...

Breathing out to calm himself down, Bai Yunfei took the floating fireseed into his hand. Slowly, he absorbed it into his chest and allowed it to travel to his origin acupoint.

He was very careful about this. If something bad were to happen, Bai Yunfei was ready to pull out at a moment's notice.

Nothing strange happened at first when the first fireseed met with the second one in his origin acupoint. Carefully nudging the two to grow closer to each other, Bai Yunfei prepared himself to use the Dual Flame Arts and bring the two fireseeds into the ready position.

As soon as the two fireseeds were about to collide, the companion lightningseed around the second fireseed suddenly began to shine with light, surprising Bai Yunfei.

But the Dual Flame Arts was already being activated, much to his greater surprise.

Already tinged with a touch of purple from its companion lightningseed, the moment when the second fireseed touched the

first, the first essence fireseed turned purple in color!

No. It was better to say that it was given some type of stimulant. The first fireseed immediately started to shine with a purple light slightly weaker than the second, but the more it touched the second fireseed, the brighter the purple light became until it was as bright as the second!

Previously ‘orbiting’ around the second fireseed, the companion lightningseed started to orbit around both fireseeds now that the two were touching!

Despite these unexpected happenings, nothing was going wrong with the Dual Flame Arts itself, much to Bai Yunfei’s pleasant surprise. He had only wanted to test out the ‘coil’ form to see if there’d be any danger, but there was none.

He even tried his ‘Berserk Mode’ for a few seconds, but that was safe as well.

“So the first fireseed had a bit of elemental lightning in it already? I didn’t detect it with before how weak it was....” Muttering to himself as he returned the fireseed to the Cataclysmic Seal. Thinking a while for why that might be, Bai Yunfei was suddenly hit with a thought. “It must be because that flash eagle back in Gaoyi City!”

Back when he first became a Soul Sprite, Bai Yunfei had nearly formed a soul contract with the flash eagle in Gaoyi City. It was strange now that he thought about it, but he could distinctly remember his origin acupoint being touched during that moment, hadn’t it? A spark of elemental lightning had been imbued in his essence fireseed during then. So that must’ve been the reason why he was able to form a companion lightningseed so easily.

Otherwise, things wouldn’t have gone so smoothly like it did.

“Getting stronger as a Soul Exalt is pretty long and hard. Getting use to the recently absorbed elemental fire will take some time to

get used to as well. I wonder when I'll be able to become a mid-stage Soul Exalt." Sighing, Bai Yunfei folded his arms against his chest.

His thoughts was interrupted by a soft chirp from Xiao Qi. Tilting his head over to look, Bai Yunfei saw a very concerned Xiao Qi standing on a tree branch. He smiled. Xiao Qi had helped him him so much during the danger with the wolf, so Bai Yunfei was very thankful to him. His feelings of thanks needed no words to be spoken due to their bond.

Shifting his glance to the wolf a hundred meters away, Bai Yunfei had the wolf come over to him by sending a command through the Beast Taming Ring.

"Eh?"

The moment when the Beast Taming Ring activated, Bai Yunfei felt something strange. When the ring took his soulforce into the wolf's mindspace, he felt a little bit of resistance!

The wolf was already right in front of him by the time Bai Yunfei realized it, so Bai Yunfei had nearly missed the feeling of resistance.

Yet, it was there, he clearly felt it. There was a 'fog' within the wolf's mindspace that was getting thicker....

"This....this is a late-stage class six?!" The thunderfire wolf was a peak late-stage class six soulbeast normally, but its current strength was definitely lower than before!

The answer came to him shortly afterwards. When the wolf's soulgem was on the verge of destruction, it had lost plenty of elemental fire and lightning to Bai Yunfei. So much, in fact, that Bai Yunfei was able to form a companion lightningseed. In other words, the soulgem received enough damage to knock it down a peg in strength.

Placing his hand back on top of the wolf's head, Bai Yunfei sent

his soulsense into its mindspace to scout out its soulgem. He could sense that the slave seal was no longer there, so there shouldn't be any danger. Still, Bai Yunfei didn't want to be careless, so he sent only a sliver of his soulsense into the soulgem.

From inside, he could sense the insights the wolf had about elemental fire and lightning. He was wanting to get a second attempt at these insights, since his first attempt had been rather busy with all that danger surrounding it. If he could try again, then his attempts to assimilate the absorbed elemental energy would be a lot easier.

But to his surprise, his soulsense was refused entry into the soulgem!

"It....it has sentience now?!" He exclaimed to himself. The barrier preventing him from entering the soulgem was clearly the result of a defense system of a sentient being. Only in these cases would a soulgem 'prevent' any intrusions while it was alive.

As he debated thinking about pushing more soulsense into the wolf's mindspace, Bai Yunfei suddenly felt a shock. It started with a shock to his soulsense, but then Bai Yunfei jerked his hand back from the wolf's head as well!

Chapter 468: A Year Goes By in a Snap

The feeling Bai Yunfei got within the soulgem was a warning. Warning that danger was near! Like the roars of an angry beast, it was warning Bai Yunfei that his next attempt would end in him being ‘devoured’, rather than being ‘refused’!

Bai Yunfei felt this once before with the blue-eyes wyrm. But back then, the wyrm wasn’t strong enough to do anything, so the feeling wasn’t too bad.

“It....it regained its sentience?!” Bai Yunfei cried out. “Will this be like the time with the flash eagle then?”

Back with the flash eagle, the slave seal had undergone a unique type of mutation and wiped away the soulbeast’s sentience. It was no longer a soulbeast puppet, but it was also empty, as if it was ‘reborn’ into the world....

Whether the thunderfire wolf was the same way would only be known with future experimentation.

Shaking his head, Bai Yunfei pulled away from the wolf. He stood up to stretch his back, only to hear a series of grumbling sounds from his stomach.

That was when he realized that he hadn’t eaten for two whole days. With such a lengthy amount of time like that and the amount of energy he used recently, it was time for him to replenish his strength.

Cooking a meal, Bai Yunfei took Xiao Qi and the wolf on to continue their journey west.

.....

For a good while, Bai Yunfei dedicated most of his time towards assimilating the rest of the absorbed elemental energy in him and acquainting himself with the companion lightningseed. The Upgrade Technique, he decided, would be dealt with another time.

Very rarely did he come across any other soulbeasts, but the thunderfire wolf and Xiao Qi dealt with them when they did.

Half a month later....

“Aooo!!!”

A blood-curdling screech was heard from somewhere within the deep Soulbeast Forest. Then from the skies, a dog-like soulbeast whose fur was green and coarse like tree bark and head strangely triangular came falling down to the ground. Its waist was completely gone, so when it fell, it fell in two halves.

“Chirp!!”

There was an excited chirp before a flash of prismatic light bolted down to where the corpse was. Talons as sharp as blades cut into the dog’s head, extracting a green-colored soulgem before it flew back into the air to toss the soulgem. From another side, a giant wolf the color red and purple caught the soulgem into its mouth before swallowing it whole.

The rainbow flash of light came to a stop in the air, revealing it to be a bird whose aura was slowly increasing in intensity.

To its side, the wolf that had swallowed the soulgem stood still, body digesting the soulgem to add to its strength.

This bird and wolf was Xiao Qi and the thunderfire wolf.

A hundred meters away, Bai Yunfei stared monotonously at the two soulbeasts with shrugged shoulders and a sigh escaping from his lips.

The two had practically been ‘bandit kings’ for the past few days. Whenever a soulbeast came forward to ‘make trouble’, the two would make short work of it and then take its soulgem. Over the course of their actions, Bai Yunfei had already lost count how many mid-stage class six soulbeasts had died by their hands....

In the earlier half of the class six area, mid-stage class six

soulbeasts were primarily seen as being the stronger soulbeasts. But in front of Xiao Qi and the thunderfire wolf, none were able to even match them.

Bai Yunfei did keep a close eye on the thunderfire wolf, however. His observations so far had hinted that the wolf was slowly regaining signs of sentience in its entire body. They weren't very noticeable, all things considered, but Bai Yunfei was sure that it wouldn't be long before the wolf would return back to normal. The only question left to be answered was if it'd be back to normal, or if it'd have to 'relearn' everything....

Xiao Qi was quite proud of its 'younger brother'. The wolf was extremely strong, and there was virtually no soulbeast that'd come close to meeting its strength in this part of the forest. Whenever Xiao Qi had trouble with a soulbeast, the wolf would come in to help. Xiao Qi would also treat the wolf right by giving it every single soulgem they got, even though it knew that it didn't matter to the wolf who got the soulgem or not. Only when they fought a particularly strange soulbeast did Bai Yunfei ask to save onto that soulgem.

Soulgems were actually very important materials for crafting. Some soulgems were even the main materials in some recipes, and forming soul armaments generally required plenty of soulgems, meaning soulgems had a better use than using to absorb.

For example, Bai Yunfei took the soulgem he extracted from the hillbeast and used it as the main ingredient in a particularly strong shield he called the Hillbeast's Shield.

By the time Bai Yunfei was done thinking, the two soulbeasts were also done with their own preparations and returned to him. Rather than having no signs of life in its eyes, the wolf's eyes were 'vacant', meaning that it was truly on its journey back to becoming a sentient soulbeast.

Mid-flight, Xiao Qi shrunk down to the size of a pigeon to settle

onto Bai Yunfei's shoulder.

“Chirp chirp~!”

Landing on his shoulder, Xiao Qi rubbed its head against his shoulder and then pointed a wing to its right.

“Hm?” He smiled, “You want to go deeper in?”

What Xiao Qi was saying to him was that the soulbeasts here were far too ‘weak’. It wanted to fight even stronger opponents and so it was asking Bai Yunfei to go deeper into the forest.

Bai Yunfei rubbed his chin to think about it. “Well, it’s not like we can’t....”

“Chirp chirp!” Xiao Qi’s wings flapped excitedly.

“.....” Unsure how exactly to respond to the antics of Xiao Qi, Bai Yunfei scratched its head fondly, “Haha, alright. Let’s take a detour in that direction then.”

They were by now, a long distance away from the battleground where the Black Dragon King fought. Heading deeper into this direction didn’t seem like a problem to Bai Yunfei, since no one would know that he took the Nephrite Throne (albeit in pieces). He had also changed his appearances (so none of the people that fought the Black Dragon King could tell), and to make it even harder to be found out, he hide his soulforce (through the Soul Concealment Art).

Aside from the Two Winged King, Bai Yunfei was confident no one else would know who he really was.

Besides, those Soul Kings wouldn’t even bother taking someone as weak as an early-stage Soul Exalt into consideration anyways.

This way, Bai Yunfei was left unimpeded to go north-west to gradually go deeper into the forest. Xiao Qi and the wolf were both very excited to fight even more soulbeasts, and even if they were at the risk of losing, they could either run away or have Bai Yunfei

step in. But that wasn't very likely.

For the most part, Bai Yunfei was more dedicated to his own training and rarely participated in battle.

And so the party of three continued deeper into the forest this way....

.....

Two months later, they were back in the middling parts of the class six area and still moving further north-west.

Another two months later, they were in the later-half of the class six area, but now they were back on track to go west.

Bai Yunfei was back to full strength now and more than ready to gain some more precious combat experience. This part of the Soulbeast Forest was fraught with danger with late-stage class six soulbeasts and even peak late-stage class six ones. Whenever one of the latter did appear, it usually took the three of them to fight it off.

His studies with the Upgrade Technique had been renewed during this time. By using most of the +8 and under upgrade stones, he was able to make some 'leeway' into his understandings. The +9 and +10 upgrade stones were kept since their effects were better put to use when crafting weapons.

The art of crafting wasn't left to rot either. The Soulbeast Forest was prosperous with rare materials, so Bai Yunfei was able to craft many soul armaments.

In the course of the past four months, Xiao Qi's strength had grown meteorically. Just in half a year, Xiao Qi was already a mid-stage class six soulbeast.

The thunderfire wolf was nearly back to the level where it once was as well. Each passing day was another day where it was more life-like than before, so it didn't seem different to any regular soulbeast.

Training, battling, crafting, and upgrading....

The metaphorical path Bai Yunfei was embarking on in the forest was the 'right' one. Every day was filled with experience Bai Yunfei could use to accelerate his growth.

.....

Without at all caring for the passage of time, Bai Yunfei found himself spending a year in it.

At last, Bai Yunfei walked out from the west side of the class six area.

He had finally reached the Skywards Mountains....

Chapter 469: The Skywards Mountains and the Crack in the Sky

In its natural position to the north of the Tianhun Empire, the Soulbeast Forest was immeasurably vast. Its most important 'exit' was Praestia Pass in the Northern Mist Province, and that was also the part of the forest where it was most concentrated. Going northwest through the forest would eventually see to the thinning out of the forest. By going east, one would begin to see less soulbeasts and more of what would expect from an ordinary forest before ultimately arriving at the endless strip of coastal regions to the continent.

To go further west out of the Soulbeast Forest was to step away from the 'protection' of Praestia Pass and come onto the naturally-occurring barrier that also separated the Soulbeast Forest and the Tianhun Empire.

The Skywards Mountains.

Expanding for countless distances, this mountain range was not only vast, but tall. Its peaks couldn't even be seen through the clouds and had always stopped many strong soulbeasts from exiting the class six area.

The other neighboring provinces past the Northern Mist Province was separated by the Soulbeast Forest and a wide patch of grassland, though no soulbeast would go through there.

The Skywards Mountains was precipitous and nearly impossible to scale. Even Soul Exalts wouldn't have the strength to climb their ways to the top with its altitude. Strong winds and violent bursts of elemental energy made it perilous to fly up there, let alone climb. A place of chaos was what it was, and legends had it that even Soul Kings were unable to withstand the chaotic elements there for long.

With the Skywards Mountains being the barrier between the class five and six areas, there was no other way to bypass the two areas besides going through the Northern Mist Province.

However. There was no such thing as the impossible in this world. Even in the tremendously long Skywards Mountains, there stood a single 'gap' that served as a passageway.

It's name was the 'Crack in the Sky'.

In the eyes of many, the Crack in the Sky was a beautiful piece of scenery that many people felt was more wondrous than Skywards Mountains. Some likened it to if someone had taken a sword to the mountain range to form a hundred-meter wide gap. As wide as a hundred meters was, compared to the entire mountain range itself, a hundred meters was truly a 'crack' in size....

So if one were to look up while walking in this gap, they'd see a line in the skies, hence it's name.

There was a legend that said His Majesty Wu Tianhun himself formed this passage with a swing of his sword.....

.....

Tianhun Calendar. Year 2013, the 15th day of the 10th month.

Tonight was an especially starry night with the bright moon shining overhead.

About a kilometer away from the Crack in the Sky, a fire flickered and danced in the night, illuminating the hill it sat upon, and the figure in which that sat next to it. Backed up by a large tree, this figure had his hand on a ring, as if looking for something. For a while, he did not move, but soon, a short sword with both edges of the blade having a saw-tooth pattern popped out from it. He gave the strange weapon a look before sighing in disappointment and putting it away back into the ring to look some more.

The occasional light from the campfire would sometimes be

bright enough to illuminate the figure's face, revealing it to be a young man no older than twenty-four years old. He wore gray robes that looked old, but not unkempt. His hair was unevenly long, as though not properly cut for some time, with the longest areas being able to reach his shoulders almost, even his bangs were nearly long enough to cover his eyes. Handsome could not be used to describe his face, but it was a mature and determined face. Added with the smile on it, this man looked like quite the free-spirited traveler.

This young man was none other than Bai Yunfei.

He had been traveling west ever since his ordeal with the Black Dragon King. Traveling for an entire year now, he had finally reached upon the entrance to the Crack in the Sky.

Originally planning to head through the passageway earlier that day to enter the class five area, Bai Yunfei decided to retire for the night and rest, to account for his situation.

Prior to him setting up shop for the night, Bai Yunfei had been ambushed right before.

The ones who ambushed him were two peak late-stage class six bone-eating treeflies.

This particular area he was in was considered the earlier half of the class six area, so it was reasonable to say that such soulbeasts shouldn't appear here.

But they did.

Bai Yunfei would only understand why they might've appeared after the battle: it was because of the Crack in the Sky.

The Crack in the Sky was the only passageway through the Skywards Mountains. Praestia Pass was usually the place where most soul cultivators would go through in order to get to the Soulbeast Forest, but there were a few that'd enter through other means. The Crack in the Sky was a popular route for some if they

wanted to go straight to the class six area without any detours.

As such, the bone-eating treeflies were most likely acting as ‘guardians’ and waited for prey to come to it.

These soulbeasts have an affinity for wood, but are also capable of flight. From the outside, they look like a regular housefly, just many times larger. But in reality, they were extremely terrifying with their razor-sharp mouthparts capable of stabbing into the brains of their prey and sucking it out. As capably strong as they are, bone-eating treeflies are also extremely dim. The rare few that became class sevens were still not able to ‘unlock’ their sentience and were nothing more than feral varmints.

Their normal ambush tactics didn’t work on Bai Yunfei, who had sensed them first and hid using his Soul Concealment Art. As someone who had been ambushed countless times, Bai Yunfei was no stranger to dealing with these situations. Going undetected, he was able to ‘counter-ambush’ them.

Without at all being careless, Bai Yunfei went straight into his Berserk Mode and fought with Xiao Qi to kill off one of the treeflies. The other one was exceedingly fast and quick on its feet despite its low intelligence, meaning it tried to flee when its partner was dead. But Xiao Qi and the thunderfire wolf gave chase.

Unable to maintain the Berserk Mode for an extended amount of time, Bai Yunfei decided to stay there and wait. Xiao Qi and the thunderfire wouldn’t need any additional help to take care of one bone-eating treefly.

And that was the reason why he was all by himself without Xiao Qi or the thunderfire wolf nearby.

Bai Yunfei hadn’t any idea just how long the two treeflies had been ‘standing guard’ near the Crack in the Sky, but he had to assume it was for a decently large amount of time, if the hundreds of bones laying about their nest was any indication.

Fortunately for Bai Yunfei, there was a plethora of soul armaments laying about the nest along with space rings of those who died here. A wealthy profit was had in the end, he had to admit.

The amount of space rings to skeletons was rather inconsistent, but with how messy the bones were laying about, Bai Yunfei just assumed that someone else had scavenged the area earlier. Clearly, someone did take the opportunity when the treeflies were away to make their scavenge.

Taking the possessions of the dead was by far not a humane action, but to have so much treasure in front of one's eyes was tempting. And to not take any would be foolish. In order to make amends for what he did, Bai Yunfei dug a hole and buried some of the bones.

He set up a bonfire here to wait for Xiao Qi and the wolf to return after that. To pass the time, he went through all the space rings he found.

Most of them were very disappointing to look at, since not many of them had anything good. After a quick look, the best thing Bai Yunfei saw was a mid-earth tier soul armament.

.....

Equipment Grade: Mid Human

Elemental Affinity: Fire

Attribute: +230 Strength

Upgrade Requirement: 80 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei nodded his head in delight at the red bracelet in his hand, “Not too high of an accessory, but it’s not bad.”

Every once in a while when he saw something decent, Bai Yunfei would upgrade it without hesitation.

A while later

Upgrade Successful

Equipment Grade: Mid Human

Elemental Affinity: Fire

Upgrade Level: +10

Attribute: +230 Strength

Additional Attribute: +110 Strength

Soul Compatibility: 10%

+10 Additional Effect: 10% Increase in fire based attacks.

Upgrade Requirement: 80 Soulpoints

Eyes bright with joy with the effect, Bai Yunfei spoke, “Increases the strength of a fire based attacks! What a useful effect!”

It was only 10%, but that was just an additional effect. Still, it was a lot better than any of the other low-earth tier soul armaments he upgraded so far.

“Not bad at all. My luck is really going for me today with all these soul armaments!” Smirking, Bai Yunfei swapped the spirit-increasing bracelet on his right hand for the new one.

After looking through several more space rings, Bai Yunfei went still for a moment when he felt something in his mind.

He smiled afterwards as he realized what it was. It was a message from Xiao Qi, telling him through their soul contract that they had killed the treefly and were on their way back.

“Alright, better make some food for them then...” He laughed, taking out several fatty fishes from his ring. They were already gutted and cleaned, meaning they were all ready to be cooked. Skewering the fishes through with tree branches, he stuck the branches next to the fire and sprinkled some seasoning onto it before letting the fire do the rest of the work.

.....

“Ahhh!!!”

Halfway done with the cooking, Bai Yunfei suddenly heard a terrified shriek.

Leaping to his feat, Bai Yunfei turned to look at the Crack in the Sky.

Under the light of the moon, he could only see a flash of red as a terrified woman in pink came running from the entrance. Her feet were a blur of red as she ran as fast as she could. Her face was filled with terror as she continued to yell in fright.

Seconds after she came running out from the Crack in the Sky, another two blurs of orange and blue came shooting out after her. With his eyes, Bai Yunfei was able to take note of two rather large men with scary expressions on their faces. The man on the left held a large ringed sword, some blood clearly still dripping down from its edge.

The moment when the woman saw Bai Yunfei on top of the hill, her face lit up with hope before changing direction towards him!

Chapter 470: A Hero Saving a Maiden?

Bai Yunfei didn't shy away when he saw the three people come out from the Crack in the Sky. Standing his ground, Bai Yunfei prepared himself for battle by bringing the Cataclysmic Seal out to his side.

The three of them were mid-stage Soul Exalts, so traversing a kilometer wouldn't be very hard for them to do. In no more than ten seconds, the woman was nearly upon Bai Yunfei, her robes blustering in the wind and her eyes brimming with tears of terror.

"Please save me, my lord!!"

She pleaded towards Bai Yunfei before flinching in pain with her hands at her left leg. Blood was flowing freely from there, a nasty wound preventing her from standing any longer. With a yelp, she toppled into Bai Yunfei's arms.

A sweet aroma immediately assaulted his Bai Yunfei's nose, intoxicating him with its smell.

Perking an eyebrow, Bai Yunfei moved forward to grab her by her left wrist and hold her steady, rather than let her collapse into his arms. Keeping her steady, he then moved past her to take on the two men after her.

"I am a student from the Aroma School in the Northern Ridge Province. I came to the Soulbeast Forest for training, but these evil men attacked and killed all my companions in the Crack in the Sky, please my lord, save me!"

The young woman cried out pitifully behind him. Her voice affected by the tragedy that befell her companions and the horrors that would've happened to her. Even in her final few words, her voice was choked up.

Casting a brief look at her, Bai Yunfei returned his glance then to the two men just two hundred meters away. The two of them were

soaked with blood from head to toe, some of it being their own blood. Clearly, these two had just been through a mighty battle, but their auras were still raring to go, and their faces were twisted malevolently in anticipation.

When the two of them saw Bai Yunfei come forward, the one holding the large sword gave a malefic laugh, “Haha! A puny mid-stage Soul Exalt! Consider it your bad luck to meet us two today! Hand over the Aroma School girl and we’ll make your death painless!”

“Kekeke!! We’ve heard plenty about the proficiency your school has in dual cultivation, come here and accompany us two, why don’t you? Or do you want to end up like your sisters and die a vengeful ghost!” The other one laughed, not even bothering to look at Bai Yunfei. His eyes leered lecherously at the woman behind him as he spoke.

A small smile tugged at the corner of Bai Yunfei’s lips.

Without hiding his strength, Bai Yunfei would be placed at the level of a mid-stage Soul Exalt. With all his training the past year and the added benefits he got from the Dual Flame Arts and the Luck Pendant, Bai Yunfei’s strength had been like a meteor with how fast it ascended.

The two of them were strong enough where Bai Yunfei’s current strength was still considered weak. With their strengths combined, they could kill a late-stage Soul Exalt with some difficulty. Killing a mid-stage Soul Exalt wasn’t a problem for them at all.

But when Bai Yunfei did nothing but smile ominously, they were infuriated. Rousing their soulforces, they flew forward to attack!

The one with an affinity for earth was the first to make a move. His right foot slammed down onto the ground, disseminating elemental earth in the form of a serpentine drill. It burrowed several meters through the ground to underneath Bai Yunfei’s feet before erupting up from it in as three separate stalagmites—one to

hit his head, chest, and waist. Flourishing his blade, the man swung his sword down to simultaneously send a blade of elemental earth onto Bai Yunfei's head.

His brother, the one with an affinity for water, swung his right fist forward like a whip. The area in front of his fist rippled briefly before droplets of water formed. Growing to the size of his fists, the spheres of water froze over before pelting Bai Yunfei!

Their tactics looked well practiced, as if they had done this many times before. One would move to limit the ways Bai Yunfei could move, and the other would pelt him with time-delayed attacks that could potentially kill him.

This economy of motion was fluid, and struck fear into the heart of the woman behind Bai Yunfei. Shirking even farther behind, she looked to Bai Yunfei with greater fear than before.

But for some reason, Bai Yunfei didn't move from his spot at all! Not even a defensive stance was put up! It was as if he was struck motionless with fear!

“Boom!!!”

The two brothers' attacks impacted on the ground where Bai Yunfei stood, kicking up dust and stone around his figure.

They were surprised, to say the least. Both of them expected Bai Yunfei to do something. But when their attacks landed, Bai Yunfei's aura had just...disappeared!

“Is he....dead?!” The earth type soul cultivator inquired, “Haha! He didn't even last one blow! Some hero he is, overestimating himself that much!”

Like the two brothers, the young woman's cherry-red lips quivered when she felt Bai Yunfei's aura disappear. Her eyes widened widely, and her feet threatened to buckle underneath her where she stood.

The other brother was skeptical. Squinting his eyes, he

immediately called out a warning, “Careful!”

Three separate daggers were thrown at shortly before he called out. Shooting out from the dust to target the first brother, who was still pleased with how successful his attack was, the daggers were followed shortly by a series of popping sounds. From the dust cloud, a dozen bullets the color red and purple pelted towards the two brothers!

As sudden as the attacks were, the two brothers weren’t caught too off-guard by it. Erecting an elemental barrier to protect themselves, the two threw themselves backwards to further alleviate the damage.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!”

The three Burstfire Daggers stuck into the barriers, exploding then after contact! The areas where the elemental barrier was hit by the daggers crumbled away, revealing three gaps in its defense! As if targeting these gaps, the bullets shot through them to attack at the person behind it!

Unprepared for this outcome, the man took took his sword up to defend himself. His sword was large enough to parry several of the bullets, but one bullet made it through his defense and struck him squarely in the right shoulder, ripping a hole in its flesh!

The other brother managed to fare better than the one hit, as he was ready for retaliation. Successfully parrying all the bullets aimed at him, the man was still surprised to see just how much power was in each of them.

But whilst the two brothers were dealing with their predicaments, Bai Yunfei was already stepping out from beyond the dust cloud, showing his uninjured self!

The Cataclysmic Seal glowed orange next to him, shining with the light that had protected him.

“Im...impossible!!”

The two Soul Exalts' eyes flew wide open in shock. They had put all their might into their attacks, and this mid-stage Soul Exalt had been completely unharmed?!

Furthermore, his aura had clearly disappeared a moment ago, so why was it back as if nothing had happened now?!

“Hmph!”

Sneering, Bai Yunfei fed soulforce to his feet, and in a burst of purple light, he...disappeared without a trace!

Chapter 471: Devotion of the Heart and Carnal Advances?

Sneering, Bai Yunfei fed soulforce to his feet, and in a burst of purple light, he...disappeared without a trace!

Disappearance was a bit of a misnomer. What really happened was that no one there saw what Bai Yunfei did. His actions had been fast enough to evade their eyes before he came to a stop right by the earth affinity Soul Exalt with a solid punch to his waist!

Eyes dilating in shock, the man brought his sword back reflexively, hoping to slash at Bai Yunfei with the return stroke. But Bai Yunfei's fist slammed unflinchingly onto the flat side of it!

“Claangggg!!”

Like the ringing of a bell, the sword echoed as it bounced, rebounding into the Soul Exalt's chest! Even more surprising was the fist-shaped indentation on its face!

Struck by the deflected blade, the man was sent flying backwards with a splurt of blood coming out from his mouth!

Surprised that such an outcome could happen, he dragged his feet against the ground, slowing his momentum. He looked back up only to see a crimson-red spear come straight for his eyes!

“Aaahhhh!!!” Furious with how he was being forced so much, he brought his sword up to protect himself once again, his soulforce bringing up another barrier of elemental earth.

“Pcht!”

The sickly sound of spear stabbing into flesh was heard then. In disbelief, the Soul Exalt looked down first at the barrier in front of him, then to the spear that had stabbed through both that and his sword to penetrate his chest.

The blood drained from his face first, and then his life drained

from his eyes....

“Y-you!” The other Soul Exalt came to a grinding halt. The sight of his brother struck dead by Bai Yunfei’s spear left him practically speechless, and his actions to help his brother left uninitiated.

His words was met with an ominous glare from Bai Yunfei, who turned to meet him. Feeling the area around him suddenly turn dark, the man looked up, only to see a giant ‘stone’ appear out of nowhere to come falling down onto him!

It was as though a bucket of icy water was dumped onto him. Without consideration for anything else but his escape, the man tossed himself away from the impact zone. The burst of elemental water he was about to attack Bai Yunfei with was instead used to attack the object so that it’d hopefully delay its fall by just a moment longer.

There was an explosion as the elemental water smashed against the underside of the Cataclysmic Seal, failing to slow its descent down by even a millisecond. The man was happy to find himself outside the impact area by this time though, so he wasn’t too upset with his failed attack.

But before he could rejoice, the Cataclysmic Seal flashed red with light before expanding in size once again!

“Boom!!!!”

With a sickening crash, the gigantic Cataclysmic Seal collided into the earth, burying the Soul Exalt out from sight and extinguishing his life like a candle!

He had been killed!

.....

Only a minute had transpired before the battle was over. In that one minute, two mid-stage Soul Exalts met their demise at the hands of Bai Yunfei before they even know what hit them!

It took only a simple few attacks for Bai Yunfei to kill the first Soul Exalt; the Eighty-one Fold Fist Force and a stab from the Fire-tipped Spear to be exact.

And the Cataclysmic Seal was all it took to take care of the next.

He hadn't even needed to use the 'coil' form, pleasing Bai Yunfei with how strong he had gotten!

He did use the +13 additional effect of the Fire-tipped Spear though, meaning he had to sacrifice half his soulforce into order to disregard the barrier and kill the man behind it.

A battle concluding this fast had its consequences. While Bai Yunfei looked quite at ease with himself, his soulforce reserves was substantially lower than what it was before.

Taking the two dead Soul Exalts space ring into his own, Bai Yunfei turned around. As he made his way back towards the flabbergasted woman, his body swayed a little with fatigue, his face clearly showing the fact that he was not completely fine. But he still managed to make his way over without stumbling.

The woman stood there, completely silent and still other than her eyes. They followed Bai Yunfei from where he was to where he walked to without ever stopping. What she was thinking about at that moment was a complete mystery.

But then when she saw Bai Yunfei sway a little, she decided then to finally speak, "My lord, are you alright?!"

Her feet were already in motion as she spoke. Taking two steps forward, she suddenly gave a pained yelp before her injured leg gave out and sent her tumbling.

Narrowing his eyes, Bai Yunfei flew to her side, grabbing her by the shoulder so that she wouldn't fall. Slowly setting her down, Bai Yunfei spoke, "Worry about yourself first, how are you?"

"Th—thank you, my lord. I....I should be fine, aside from a few small injuries....b—but they shouldn't trouble me too much...."

She fidgeted shyly, trying to disengage herself from Bai Yunfei's hands with reddened cheeks. Her speech was stammered out, but whether it was from her pain or from her embarrassment was a mystery.

It was only when she twisted away from him did Bai Yunfei see some tears in her robes, especially in the area where her chest was supposed to be hidden. A sword must've torn through it earlier just enough to unearth her snowy-white skin. The area most revealing was where two 'mountains' were, and the valley in between....

A sight paired with such a beautiful face would've mesmerize any single man, and even Bai Yunfei found his breathing hitch a bit....

“Ahh!!”

It was then that woman noticed the state of her dress. Both of his arms flew up to cover her modesty, but with how weak she was feeling now, her legs gave up, seeing to her drop to the ground completely.

Subconsciously, Bai Yunfei grabbed hold of her in a semi-hug.

“Are you alright? You must be quite injured, let me help you.” He spoke, his hands preparing to send soulforce into her body to hasten her recovery.

“No! That's fine...” The woman spoke up suddenly and pushed herself away from Bai Yunfei's hands, “Thank you for your concern, my lord....but I practice a very particular style of cultivation and cannot accept the soulforce of another....”

“Oh? A style like that exists?” Bai Yunfei asked, “You said you're....from the Aroma School in the Northern Ridge Province?” He asked curiously.

She nodded. “I am. My name is Fen Die, an apprentice of one of the elders. I came with my sisters to the Soulbeast Forest through the Skywards Mountains in hopes of finding a soulbeast to contract with. But....but we never thought we'd be

ambushed.....My sisters were killed, and their killers....they....they wanted to humiliate me....I tried my best to run away, I did. I managed to make it out from the Crack in the Sky, and if not for you, my lord, I.....I would most likely not have been able to escape from them....”

She started to shudder, as if traumatized by her experience and what would’ve befallen her if not for Bai Yunfei. Half-choked with tears, the woman looked extremely pitiful, and any man would’ve long since been hit with the urge to console her with a hug.

Even Bai Yunfei found himself breathing slightly heavier than usual....

“My...my lord....were you not hurt by those evildoers earlier?” She inquired, looking up to face him with concern.

Quirking an eyebrow, Bai Yunfei smiled, “I might’ve exerted myself a little bit, but I’m still fine. Thank you for your con—”

He hissed softly, feeling his soulforce slacken slightly enough to draw sweat to his brows, though he covered his discomfort just as quickly as it appeared.

Unfortunately for him, the woman noticed his discomfort. She bit her lips, as if hesitating for a moment, and her breathing grew slightly faster when she looked again at him.

When Bai Yunfei looked curiously at her, she looked back with a flushed expression, “My lord, I...I can perhaps help you with your healing....”

“Hm?” He asked, “What do you mean?”

“Do you know why, my lord, I said I could not accept the soulforce of another?”

“I don’t.”

“It is because....we of the Aroma School have a very unique style of cultivation. If we take in the soulforce of another, especially that

of a male, then....then we start to feel lust, lust that we cannot escape from....”

“Ah??” Bai Yunfei’s jaw dropped slightly open.

The flush on the young woman’s face grew to her neck with her embarrassment. Summoning up her courage, she looked at him straight in the eye, her own eyes filled with timidity. “Our Aroma School is very well-suited to dual cultivation and in healing situations. It can increase the potency, especially if its our....our first time....

“My lord, you saved me from those evil men, and you were hurt as a result....I....I am will—willing to give my heart to you, my lord....”

“Er....” His mouth still half-way open, Bai Yunfei wasn’t sure what to say and stared at the woman.

Her hands had already dropped from her chest. Both of her ample breasts were trembling erotically for Bai Yunfei to see as the woman waited for his answer. Her upper teeth bit down softly at her bottom lip, and just faintly, Bai Yunfei smelt the soft aroma of something strange, nearly intoxicating him.

“Hu....huff...” His breathing grew more and more labored, his face reddened like a tomato now. A never-before light in his eyes while he looked like he was trying to fight with himself over something.

“My lord....”

Her voice sounded melodic to the ears and as hypnotizing as magic.

Unable to contain himself any longer, Bai Yunfei found himself stretching his right hand out to swipe at the tattered parts of the young woman’s clothes!!

Chapter 472: Striking Down a Delicate 'Flower'? A Bewitching Fox!

What kind of man would be able to resist the allure of a young woman willing to lay with him, with the act being able to not only heal his wounds, but increase his strength as well? And added with the absolute desolation of the area and having just recently saved her from her would-be r*pists and murderers, it was almost a given....

Such an erotic storyline like this isn't rare in many plots, and it often meant the addition of one more person to a male main character's harem.

But unfortunately for everyone, this book isn't a harem novel, and neither will it have a happy wet dream like this one....

.....

The young woman's shyness was practically irresistible, and any other man would've took it as their time to collect their dues already. With how her eyes were filled with longing for him, Bai Yunfei looked as if he could contain his carnal desires no more to thrust his hand towards her tattered robes!

His actions sparked a reaction from the young woman, her eyes flashing with an almost undetectable light that didn't at all match with her shy demeanor!

But then, the 'unbelievable' happened in the next second....

When Bai Yunfei's right hand thrust out to seemingly grab at the ripped parts of her clothes, his hand curled up into a fist to punch the woman's shoulder without hesitation!

“Bang!”

Yelping in surprise, the woman flew backwards as if concussed by a heavy explosion from his punch!

In the brief airtime she had, the woman flipped onto her feet and dragged them across the ground. Her hand flew to her aching shoulder, her face twisted in pain as she stared frightfully at Bai Yunfei, “My...my lord. Wha—what are you doing?!”

It had been such a gentle and sweet background just a moment ago, but then Bai Yunfei suddenly went from a beast to a tyrant to so viciously strike down such a delicate little ‘flower’ like her?!

Bai Yunfei stood up. His eyes stared at the young woman without the pitying expression he had before. The lust was no longer there either, in its place was a cold and detached expression, his lips curling together with what appeared to be a deliberating smile.

“My lord, what....what are you doing? What reason are you hurting this woman of yours? I....” Her frame shook gently with pain, her meek voice trembling with fear.

“Pah, are you still trying to pretend?” Bai Yunfei smirked in complete disregard for the pitiful-looking woman in front of him.

His feet flashed with purple light as he moved forward, his right hand burning bright red with fire to aim another punch onto the woman’s shoulder!

Jolting in surprise, the woman was dumbfounded at his reactions, but her helpless demeanor vanished straight away as she dodged Bai Yunfei’s punch almost gracefully....so fluidly, as if she wasn’t even injured in the first place?!

Feeling nothing but air from his attack, Bai Yunfei came to a stop and allowed for the woman to retreat several steps backwards to stare at him.

“How did you find out?”

Her voice was no longer sweetly sounding. It was cold to the ears, and her facial expression was equally as icy.

“I knew something was wrong with the situation as soon as you appeared.” He answered casually while he looked her over once

more.

Eyes widening once again with surprise, the woman cried out, “Impossible! My acting was flawless back then, how did you...”

“Flawless, you say?” Bai Yunfei laughed, “Yeah, those two guys really were trying to kill you, and their blood was definitely real as well, so they definitely killed somebody—probably from the Aroma School as well. The only thing that was off was you. You weren’t hurt by them, you were just pretending. And....those two probably didn’t know they were being tricked as well.”

“They were real, but you were not. I have to say though, your acting was perfect. Not many would’ve been able to see through your act....”

“Then how....”

“Illusions and enchantment....” Bai Yunfei chuckled, “that’s how you did it, right?”

A response like that caused the woman to stagger half a step backwards. “Ho—you, how did you know! I refuse to believe it! You’re only a mid-stage Soul Exalt, how did you see through my mesmerizations?! This is impossible!”

“Mesmerization? Is there such a thing? Were those two guys caught in that then? I couldn’t tell, but those two guys were probably caught up in that and their bloodlust....

“You tried to mesmerize and make me more willing to save you from those two men. After that, it’d be hook, line and sinker to have me fall to my lust before you kill me....”

He was speaking casually to her, but his soulforce was working itself in a frenzy to prepare for a fight. His Fire-tipped Spear appeared in his hand as a precaution, “Just like you said, anyone not a Soul King would’ve fallen for your Mesmerization. It’s undetectable. But unfortunately for you, ‘mental’ attacks like these aren’t as effective. I’d find out about those in a second!”

The smile on his face grew wider, “I could see the fox tail behind you the moment you stepped out in front of me....”

All emotions were wiped away from the woman’s face as she listened to Bai Yunfei speak. Everything she had worked so hard on had been completely useless on him!

Something Bai Yunfei said did however, spark stupefaction to show on her face. Unable to stop herself, she cried, “Preposterous!! You know that I am a bewitching fox?!”

“What?” Such a question startled Bai Yunfei, his mind racing to think about what was just said to him.

“Bewitching fox? Oh f*ck, you’re a soulbeast?!”

“Ahhh?!”

Likewise, the woman cried out again, her face growing even stranger. Did she misread the situation?

The ‘fox tail’ Bai Yunfei mentioned had been common saying he learned from the shattered memories of the transmigrator. But while it was common in the eyes of the transmigrator, such a saying didn’t exist in the Tianhun Continent, so it was no wonder the woman was shocked. She had thought that Bai Yunfei had guessed out her true identity!

She was one of the more rare types of soulbeasts in the world, a bewitching fox!

Thunderfire wolves, wind squallers, and blue-eyes wyrms are all different types of rare soulbeasts, their intellect higher than most among their own. But there existed the bewitching fox clan, soulbeasts that could speak the human tongue when they reach the class five level and transform into a human form by the class six level!

The most important aspect of bewitching foxes lied upon the ‘bewitching’ part of their name. When they take human form, their beauty would be devastatingly beautiful! It didn’t matter if

they were male or female, absolutely no one of the opposite sex would ever refuse their charm.

Bewitching foxes were rumored to be adept in the art of ‘Mesmerization’, a combination of illusion and enchantment. They could ensnare the hearts of their victims without their knowing and control even their actions. From there, it’d be a simple matter to kill them as they dreamed.

In these legends, it was also said that there existed a class seven bewitching fox a thousand years ago, the Bewitching Fox Queen. Infiltrating the Tianhun Empire, it was able to use its Mesmerization to bewitch the heart of a certain warlord, one whose strength was of the late-stage Soul King level! The calamity she brought upon that warlord’s province had been so harsh that the commoners were unable to make a living, and many soul cultivators lost their lives before the King himself came down to kill her.

Three hundred years had already passed in the empire since the last known incident with the bewitching fox clan. So no one—especially Bai Yunfei, guessed that he would have run into one today....

Chapter 473: A Trap!

This particular bewitching fox had the same idea as the bone-eating treefly. By ‘squatting’ near the entrance of the Crack in the Sky, it spent most of its time waiting for prey. This one was close to becoming a late-stage class six soulbeast and had spent a good twenty years or so preying on unsuspecting soul cultivators to kill and empower itself.

Unlike the two bone-eating treeflies who only wished to devour soul cultivators for power, this bewitching fox knew soul cultivators had another valuable good on their bodies.

Their space rings, to be exact. Countless primal stones and soulgems were hidden inside those rings, and the fox knew it’d help its training out by a substantial degree.

There was two reasons why the bewitching fox never drew close to the bone-eating tree flies. Firstly, they were stronger than it was, and their intelligence was far too low for its Mesmerization to be of any use.

So it decided to kill any soul cultivator that might not have made contact with them or any soul cultivators fortunate enough to escape at its convenience. Due to its high intelligence, it would always stay far away from the area whenever a strong opponent such as a peak late-stage Soul Exalt came by.

For twenty years the fox continued to grow and prosper until it was oh-so-close to becoming a late-stage class six. Its strength was substantially stronger than what it was when it first arrived, and it could fight a late-stage Soul Exalt sometimes. If it used its Mesmerization arts, then even they would find themselves virtually defenseless and die cursing it.

At one point, the fox was able to use its Mesmerization to allure two late-stage Soul Exalts who already hated each other. It only took a little more prodding before the two of them were at each

other's necks. From there, the fox watched as the two fought before coming in when both sides were near-death to suck up their origin essences and their lives.

It was actually through that one encounter that the fox was able to become a mid-stage class six.

Tonight, it just so happened that Bai Yunfei became the fox's next target. It was only just coming back from the class five area through the Crack in the Sky when it noticed Bai Yunfei fighting the bone-eating treeflies. Hiding a good distance away, it waited for Xiao Qi and the thunderfire wolf to chase after the one that left before planning its attack on Bai Yunfei.

The fox didn't see Bai Yunfei use his Berserk Mode to kill the treefly, so it assumed Bai Yunfei was only a mid-stage Soul Exalt and was thus an easy enough target for it to kill.

As it decided on a means of attack on Bai Yunfei, the fox was suddenly met with yet another intrusion on the other side of the Crack in the Sky. Peering in, it saw two mid-stage Soul Exalts massacring a group of students from the Aroma School.

This particular bewitching fox had never once stepped beyond the confines of the Soulbeast Forest, but living for so long in this place gave it a good degree of knowledge on the neighboring provinces. It only took a quick few glances at the murdered students to morph itself into a similar appearance. By pretending to be a student, the fox then used its Mesmerization to catch the eye of the two brothers.

Those who embraced their desires were a much easier target for the fox to influence. All it took was a single usage of its Mesmerization to heighten the brother's desire to kill and suppress their rationality. Through this, the brothers would take the fox to be a student of the Aroma School and would thus chase after it to kill.

The next step in the plan was to have them run into Bai Yunfei

and duke it out. The two would kill Bai Yunfei, and the fox would in turn kill the two Soul Exalts with ease.

Every plan has its problems, and the fox had never guessed that Bai Yunfei would instead kill the two Soul Exalts!

His quick work of the two filled the fox with fear, actually. Its first instinct was to run, but then it noticed that something was amiss with Bai Yunfei.

From there, the fox deduced that he must've used some sort of technique that took a lot of energy.

And that meant Bai Yunfei would be an easier target to kill!

A new step was added to the plan then. The fox would use its Mesmerization to inhibit Bai Yunfei's sense of reason and increase his libido. With an ample amount of time and acting, Bai Yunfei would be in the perfect situation to kill.

But then the second problem in its plan came in the form of Bai Yunfei countering its ambush with one of his own!!

His ridiculing sneer and ominous eyes brought a chill to the fox's skin then. And once again, it started to fear for its life....

.....

The revealment of the fox's 'identity' startled him more than the fox itself! Not once did Bai Yunfei think he'd meet one of the 'legendary' bewitching foxes!

"Her Mesmerization is pretty amazing. I didn't even know about it until it was almost too late and lost myself...." Bai Yunfei sighed. He spoke earlier that he had been in charge the entire case, but that wasn't true. For a brief moment, he was treading on very thin ice.

He hadn't detected the Mesmerization, that was true. His strength as a mid-stage Soul Exalt wasn't stronger than the fox, so it'd be impossible for him to personally detect it.

But that's why he had his upgraded equipment!

The +12 ring he had on his right hand decreased the effects of mind-based attacks, and it would tell him when such an attack was happening!

It warned him as soon as the fox used its Mesmerization on him. Knowing that, Bai Yunfei knew this 'woman' wasn't as innocent as she seemed. Something was off with the two Soul Exalts as well, their bloodlust was a little 'too' much, even for the standards of this world. It seemed as though they thought about nothing but slaughter.

After confirming that the two Soul Exalts were bewitched by the fox's Mesmerization, Bai Yunfei grew uninterested in 'saving' the two. Their deaths had been quick, but costly, due to the effects of the +13 additional effect of the Fire-tipped Spear.

There was a reason why he used that effect; it was to confuse the 'true enemy'. He wanted to trick the fox into thinking that he had taken out the two Soul Exalts without problem, but he misjudged the effects of losing half his soulforce and 'accidentally' showed her.

Bai Yunfei finding out she was a bewitching fox had been the real surprise though. So real, that Bai Yunfei forgot about attacking her after that.

"So you're a bewitching fox. You had the same idea as the bone-eating treeflies then. Killing all those people, I mean? Even me being here didn't escape your notice...."

"Hmph! How brazen you are! One of us will live, and the other will die! I'll show you the true power of the bewitching foxes!!" The fox howled. Red light started to shine from the woman's as elemental fire started to manifest around her. In the next second, the woman's body blurred away and turned into a yellow-colored fox the same size of an ox!

She had returned to her soulbeast form!

The fox was afraid. For the first time in a while, it would have to reveal its full strength to make battle.

“Brat!! This place will be your burial grounds!!” The fox boomed. A giant tail swung out behind the fox, crashing through a tree.

“.....”

Bai Yunfei froze up. His eyes widened with yet another wave of shock. “You’re....you’re kidding! You’re a guy! That’s not fair!!”

He was right! The reason why Bai Yunfei was surprised because of the voice he heard....

The fox’s voice was not high-pitched like what a female would have. Instead, it was deep, just like a male!

The fox was....a male bewitching fox! That beautiful woman who had only just been standing in front of him a while ago ‘genderbent’ itself into a male!

A wave of dread washed over Bai Yunfei. He thought about what he had done before then, and what the fox did. It’s declaration of ‘devotion’, the ‘half-hug’ they shared....

Goosebumps came to life all over Bai Yunfei’s skin....

The bewitching fox clearly took no hesitation in attacking Bai Yunfei as he was lost in thought. Opening its jaws wide open, it fired off a burst of elemental fire to aim at Bai Yunfei!

Forming elemental bursts of fire like this wasn’t uncommon for soulbeasts to do. Their attacks were far more concentrated with elemental energy, but the one the fox fired off was far stronger than what a late-stage class six soulbeast would be capable of. The fireball traveled closely to the ground, scorching the earth where it traveled.

“Boom!!!”

Bai Yunfei was engulfed in a fiery explosion, kicking up dirt and

stone where the crater formed.

“Bang!” Before the fireball could fully dissipate from sight, an even stronger stream of fire appeared from the dust cloud. Protected by the Cataclysmic Seal, Bai Yunfei stepped out from it, his entire body also protected by a layer of fire. His anger was extremely noticeable to see in his eyes, and the Fire-tipped Spear was gripped tightly in his hands.

“You being a soulbeast wasn’t bad enough. You’re a male that loves to pretend to be a female and tried to ‘seduce’ me....enough is enough!”

Chapter 474: Thousand Fox Phantasm

The Cataclysmic Seal protected Bai Yunfei from the fox's fireball, allowing Bai Yunfei to step forward from the crater. Gripping the Fire-tipped Spear tightly, he flew towards the fox to stab him!

“Whoosh!!!”

But before he was even halfway to the fox, Bai Yunfei felt his eyes start to blur a bit, and then the fox had suddenly....disappeared from sight?!

Startled, Bai Yunfei began to turn around, but then his eyes started to blur again and the fox suddenly reappeared right in front of him! It hadn't moved at all from its original direction, but its sharp claws were just moments away from stabbing into his chest!

“Bang!”

Bai Yunfei raised his spear up just in time. The fox's palm clashed with the shaft of the spear, but the claws were just long enough to scratch at the armor Bai Yunfei wore, creating sparks with the friction.

Stepping backwards, Bai Yunfei dodged another claw swipe from the fox to return to his original spot.

“An illusion!!”

When the bewitching fox disappeared the first time, Bai Yunfei felt his +12 spirit-resist ring pulsate; he was definitely in an illusion of some sort!

He never fought against an illusionist before. While illusions were a type of attack on the mind, it was still a whole field of its own.

And the illusions of the bewitching fox weren't as shallow as to only affect his vision. It affected his soulsense as well!

Mind racing to find a solution, Bai Yunfei opted for the direct

approach. Using the Flash Steps, Bai Yunfei flew straight for the bewitching fox faster than before!

The difference in speed surprised the fox, who screeched once in response. Then, right in front of Bai Yunfei's eyes, the fox turned into three!

This was no mirror-image, this was an illusion!

A faint buzzing sound was heard in Bai Yunfei's ears next. It came from all around him, making Bai Yunfei feel extremely wary.

The ring on his right hand was a constant source of fluctuation, rousing Bai Yunfei from the illusions just in time for him to feel a claw come straight for his head!

“Whoosh!!”

His spear came forward as well. The tip of it proved mighty enough to break through the fox's elemental barrier and straight into its body!

But then....the body faded away!

Bai Yunfei felt soulforce start to gather from his right. Looking there, he saw the fox suddenly leap at him to tear at his heart with its claw!

Hastily bringing up his spear, Bai Yunfei tried his best to protect himself. The fox's claw struck the spear down in the middle with a clang, but the power behind the claw was far stronger than Bai Yunfei anticipated! Severing the spear in half, the claw went straight through it and penetrated into Bai Yunfei's chest!

It was with glee that the fox admired its handiwork. But something felt off. The fox was sure that its claws hit something, since it felt the tactile feedback from the blow, but there was no blood! The corpse fell to the ground, and then out of sight!

All of a sudden, two more Bai Yunfeis came at the fox's head from the left as if leaping out from a nightmare!

The +12 additional effect of the Fire-tipped Spear, Doppelganger!

Knowing it hadn't enough time to defend itself, the fox threw itself to the right to just barely evade two spear strikes.

“Boom!!!”

One of the spears grazed across the fox's skin and exploded with an ear-deafening explosion. A furious blast of energy concussed into its body, tossing the fox several meters through the air! The ground where the tip of the spear struck had been reduced to a crater about thirty meters large!

On top of the crater, Bai Yunfei stood there with slightly bent knees. Straightening himself up with his left hand on his spear, Bai Yunfei raised his right hand up to have the palm face the fox, who was trying to stabilize itself. The Ardent Sun Glove on his hand glowed a brilliant red light as a fireball about twenty meters in circumference formed over it. As soon as it formed, the fireball shot towards the fox with a speed far faster than it took to form!

It was like a bullet with its speed!

There was another flash of red light from the crimson-red bracelet on Bai Yunfei's right wrist, and then, the fireball grew in size yet again!

“Whoosh!”

The fox was only just then brought its feet to the ground when the fireball had formed. By the time it was still and steady, the fireball was well on its way towards it. The initial explosion from the spear had left the fox speechless; it couldn't believe that a spear could create such a devastating explosion like that....And by the time he looked back up, the fireball was nearly upon it!

Instinctively, the fox pressed all four of its feet to the ground. With a push so mighty that it left claw marks on the ground, the fox leapt several dozen meters up into the air just in time for the fireball to impact on the ground where it once been, exploding and

wrecking havoc!

Airborne now, the fox focused elemental energy to its paws, allowing it to remain in the air. It threw itself to the side again to dodge another fireball from Bai Yunfei. Now in a safer position where it could catch its breath, the fox howled furiously!

A headache so strong that it felt akin to being stabbed in the head with several daggers slammed into Bai Yunfei's mind the instant the fox howled. His body tottered unsteadily for a moment as he tried to regain his composure.

But when he looked back up, Bai Yunfei's eyes flew wide open!

In that one moment he looked away, Bai Yunfei found himself....surrounded!

Thousands of bewitching foxes had suddenly surrounded Bai Yunfei for hundreds of meters around!

With their numerous numbers, not even the smallest of gaps could be exploited. They all looked alike, and their fangs were sharp and ready to attack.

This was the ultimate attack of the bewitching fox, Thousand Fox Phantasm!

When the art of Mesmerization reached the pinnacle of what it could accomplish, its best feats was in the aspect of 'illusion' rather than 'seduction'! Projecting its image into the world, the fox could split its body so well that no enemy would be able to tell which one was the real one!

Thousands of foxes and only one of them being actually real. A situation like this meant that the fox could attack from anywhere at any given time!

Even if Bai Yunfei was the same level of strength as the fox, he very much doubted that he'd be able to tell where the fox was. If there was one thing he was certain of, it was that the fox didn't escape.

The only problem was that he couldn't tell which fox was the real one with how similar they looked to one another.

Any lesser soul cultivator would most likely give in to despair by this point and try to attack at the swarm carelessly. Some might try to defend themselves fruitlessly even, but Bai Yunfei wasn't flustered. The Cataclysmic Seal flew up above him to protect him with a barrier. He stared at the thousand foxes around him with a small smile, his spear disappearing back into his ring.

Both of his hands blurred briefly before the Desert Eagles appeared in them both. Bai Yunfei's right foot took a half-step backwards, his chest leaning slightly backwards to adopt a strange stance.

Gun-fu!!

Bai Yunfei narrowed his eyes. His body blurred together as he started to turn in all sorts of direction, the Desert Eagles in his hands shooting bullet after bullet in an endless stream of attack!

“Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!.....”

The only things that could be heard for the next few moments was the loud ringing sounds of gunfire. Nearly a thousand bullets fired, each one aimed carefully to take down a different fox!

Bai Yunfei wouldn't be able to find out which fox was the real one if he used his soulsense. So he decided to rely on the bullets. The soulforce in the bullets would help them lock onto their targets, no matter if it was real or not!

“Over there!!”

Bai Yunfei came to a stop facing towards the left, his Desert Eagle pointing at one specific fox before firing off a round without hesitation!

Chapter 475: Shattered Illusions

The fox eyed the bullets Bai Yunfei was firing out one after another, his actions were very strange to the fox. It had never seen such movements before so it was confused at what Bai Yunfei was trying to do.

Then when Bai Yunfei pointed both of whatever soul armaments he held in his hands at the fox, hundreds of little bullets were fired at it!

The move it was so proud of, the Thousand Fox Phantasm, was beaten in just two short moments?!

In disbelief, the fox inhaled sharply. All of the phantasms it had around Bai Yunfei were completely gone now, and the world around it was on fire now. With several banging sounds, the fox's defenses was rained upon by these hundred bullets.

The strength of the two Desert Eagles were extraordinary, but the fox's defenses were even stronger.

Availing itself to an opening in the burstfire of bullets, the fox leapt to the right, its eyes flashing strangely with a hallucogenic light. Crying loudly, it gave Bai Yunfei a full dose of its glare!

As it was with human nature, it was inevitable that Bai Yunfei followed the fox when it leapt away from its original position. This meant when the fox glared at Bai Yunfei, their eyes met!

“Crap!”

Bai Yunfei averted his eyes as quickly as he could, but it was far too late. The fox's illusion was already taking effect on his mind by erasing the fox away from his eyesight and soulsense!

The next thing Bai Yunfei heard was the faint chuckling of several young women. Without warning, a fog of mist descended onto the area, and a stunningly beautiful woman stepped out from it. A ribbon was all that covered several parts of her naked body,

her eyes enchanting to the pupils as she sauntered over to him.

She drew close enough to Bai Yunfei for him to smell the distinct aroma of orchid and her breathing. Her jade-white hand touched at Bai Yunfei's cheek, feeling at his warmth.

It felt so real! Bai Yunfei was starting to feel himself burn on in the inside even....

His face refused to show the ecstasy he was feeling, however. His eyes were bloodshot, and his mind knew this was an illusion, but another voice was whispering to him, refuting his mind. "This is real," it whispered, "lose yourself to your pleasures...."

"Ahhhh!!!!"

He bit his tongue.

Roaring furiously, Bai Yunfei's entire body went ablaze, expelling his soulforce into the surrounding area and dispelling the beautiful woman in front of him into ashes. Still bloodshot in the eyes, Bai Yunfei jabbed his finger forward!

Obeying his actions, the Cataclysmic Seal flashed orange, and then red. Flying forward, it started to grow in size from just a scant ten meters to a kilometer!!

Already some distance away from Bai Yunfei, the brick flew over his head as large as a mountain to swat everything in front of him!

Bai Yunfei had only been stuck in that illusion for three seconds at most. So while the fox had time to move about, it wouldn't get too far away from the range of the brick for sure! With how vast the brick was now, there was very little the brick wouldn't hit!

A good three hundred meters away, the fox was floating in the sky to prepare itself to attack. Bai Yunfei's entrapment into its illusion made it happy, it thought it'd have some time to breathe. As it was preparing its ultimate move to strike Bai Yunfei down, the man had suddenly snapped out from the illusion with a roar! Not even a second after that, the tiny brick had transformed into a

mighty mountain to go barreling towards it!

Frightened out of its skin, the fox screeched, summoning several fireballs to pelt the brick with. They slammed against the brick, but to its dismay, the brick didn't slow down in the slightest!

Its failure to slow down the brick took away the precious time it used to have to run away, and now it was too late! The brick was just an instant away from hitting it!

The brick smashed through the fox's barrier as if it wasn't there, swatting the fox as if it would swat a fly. With a bang, the fox was flung away, its bones cracking in several places and blood coming out from many of its orifices!

Instead of chasing after the fox, the brick came to a stop after they made contact. Straight away, it shrunk back to its original size as Bai Yunfei's soulforce was no longer feeding it.

Bai Yunfei looked deathly pale now, losing so much soulforce so quickly made his head spin. The Violet Soul Ring flashed brightly with light as the 2000 stockpiled soulpoints transferred to his body.

His cheeks flushed with life as the soulforce ran through his body. Renewed, Bai Yunfei hoisted his right hand up to aim the Fire Eagle!

It was time for a Homing Bullet!

A bullet barely the size of a peanut shot out from the barrel of the Fire Eagle. The gun wasn't aimed directly at the fox, but the bullet swerved unnaturally to follow the fox as it flew through the air!

The only emotion left in the fox now was fear. Not a single thing had gone according to plan ever since it met Bai Yunfei, and after several exchanges, the fox knew it had underestimated the mid-stage Soul Exalt. This man wasn't a brat, it was an opponent it couldn't beat!

It had to run! It had to escape as far as possible! Spitting another

mouthful of blood, the fox uprighted itself and used the momentum it still had to fly off away from Bai Yunfei.

But no sooner did it upright itself did the fox hear a faint whistling sound. Looking behind, it saw a fiery bullet come chasing after it!

If it was before, the fox would've disregarded this bullet and let it hit its shield. But after it was hit with the Cataclysmic Seal, the fox was hardly in a shape to be doing any rapid movements, let alone reallocate its soulforce into a barrier. Before it could even do that, however, the bullet pierced into its injured waist and blew up!

“Ahhhh!!!!”

Shrieking with pain when the bullet hit, the fox watched in agony as a relatively large hole was formed on its skin. Blood was pouring out in large amounts now, and its bones could be seen from outside.

Its vision was growing hazy now, but not so hazy that it felt like it'd faint. Adrenaline and its preservation instincts were kicking in to help dull the pain, and with another kick, the fox flew even faster.

“Chirp!!”

A moment after it kicked, the fox heard the furious chirp of a bird. Looking up, it saw a rainbow flash of light in front of it, and then a black disk....

Xiao Qi had returned!

“No!!!!”

The fox screamed in despair. But it was too late. The Spatial Edge had cut across its neck—decapitating the fox!

Swooping down, Xiao Qi's claws dug into the fox's head and tore out its soulgem without remorse. Trilling happily, it sent a message back to Bai Yunfei and returned to him with the soulgem.

.....

“Whew....” Bai Yunfei sighed in relief. His body swayed unsteadily for a moment as he wiped his forehead, cleaning it of the sweat.

In just a brief ten minutes, Bai Yunfei had experienced yet another bout of danger. This was the very first time he had fought against an illusionist, and his heart was still trying to calm itself down from the terrifying ordeal.

Luckily for him, the fox hadn't been very strong and his equipment made up for the difference. The +12 ring was especially useful its resistance against the fox's Mesmerization. Without it, he wouldn't have been able to snap out from the illusions or finish the battle as quickly as he did.

He forwent the Dual Flame Arts so that the fireseed in the Cataclysmic Seal wouldn't be removed from it. That way, the brick would be a lot stronger.

All in all, Bai Yunfei wasn't physically injured, but he had used a lot of soulforce and his soul was quite fatigued.

So he was happy for Xiao Qi and the thunderfire wolf returning. Sitting down, he tried to catch his breath.

The night was quiet once again now. Any indications that a fierce battle had taken place here was masked by the night, and not a living being was stirring. All that was left to see was Bai Yunfei and his body with the occasional burst of red light.

Daylight came soon enough. The rising of the sun was accompanied by a drawn out sigh from Bai Yunfei. Cheeks rosy with life, Bai Yunfei opened his eyes.

“Chirp chirp~!”

Standing guard loyally on the side, Xiao Qi chirped happily. It flew into the air and circled around his head twice before coming to a descent onto his shoulder.

Bai Yunfei smiled, taking the pink soulgem from Xiao Qi's claw. "Haha, thank you," he scratched the bird's head, "I'm fine now."

Before he could study the soulgem, Bai Yunfei was interrupted by another few chirps from Xiao Qi. Confused, he looked up, "What?"

Xiao Qi nodded its head.

Still confused, Bai Yunfei turned his head to look a hundred meters away where the thunderfire wolf was still standing guard.

The reason why he was confused was because Xiao Qi had told him that something strange had happened to the thunderfire wolf....

Chapter 476: Goodbye, Wolf

There was something different to the thunderfire wolf. Before, it used to stand and move about like a puppet, but this time, it was more like an ordinary soulbeast.

And there was the Beast Taming Ring on its neck. Bai Yunfei never bothered to ‘control’ its actions, preferring that Xiao Qi did all of the ‘planning’. Even in battle, the wolf moved autonomously. All the Beast Taming Ring did was to increase the feeling of loyalty it felt and guaranteed that it wouldn’t betray him.

Finally, there was the expression of the thunderfire wolf to examine. No longer did it have the ‘fearsome’ expression on its face. It never once harbored any ‘feelings’ of resistance from its ‘master’ before, but it would always have that same expression on its face. But now, it was looking at him like a docile pet would, making Bai Yunfei very curious.

When it first begun to regain its sentience, the wolf’s mindspace had been a mess. But even as a mess, it didn’t offer up any resistance the few times Bai Yunfei commanded it, making it seem like an obedient child that didn’t know anything about the world.

Many months had already transpired since Bai Yunfei last entered the wolf’s mindspace. He already felt the wolf to be like a ‘companion’ to him, especially in the eyes of Xiao Qi. The two soulbeasts were constantly together, even in battle. Their unison was even better than with Bai Yunfei.

So Xiao Qi telling him that something was strange with the wolf alarmed Bai Yunfei. He was baffled that something else could be going on with the wolf.

The wolf stood there in front of Bai Yunfei, vigilant at its surroundings, but otherwise looking barely different from normal. Focusing, Bai Yunfei transmitted an order to the Beast Taming Ring.

And then what happened after that surprised him—the wolf didn't immediately obey the command—for the very first time, there was a very definite sign of 'refusal' in the wolf's mindspace!!

“Eh?!” Bai Yunfei cried out loud.

This was the very first time he saw the usually 'obedient' wolf disobey. Granted, the order he gave was a very small one, but to have the wolf outright refuse to obey stunned him! And before Bai Yunfei could give another command, the wolf was slowly making its way towards him.

Not only did it disobey his command, it was walking straight towards him!

Even more shockingly, Bai Yunfei saw a light in the wolf's eyes that looked surprisingly human-like!

Bai Yunfei had never seen this before. The thunderfire wolf would normally have a light in its eyes, but those were usually reminiscent with what any other soulbeast would have. Even the blue-eyes wyrm and its unnaturally human-like intelligence didn't hold a match to the light the wolf had now. What the wolf had was completely similar to what a human would look like in the eyes!

Actually, Bai Yunfei saw this once before. The red magiboar and the quickshade bird had both a similar look in their eyes, but Xiao Qi's eyes held a light that was both stronger and exactly the same as the wolf's.

“What's....”

By now, the wolf was standing three meters from, and then in the next second, Bai Yunfei's eyes flew open like a startled cat whose tail had just been stepped on!

“Yunfei, I've a matter I wish to speak to you about.”

The voice of a hoarse male spoke to Bai Yunfei's ears, making Bai Yunfei temporarily forget himself.

This voice was coming out from the thunderfire wolf's mouth!

"Y-you...." Looking as if he had just seen a ghost, Bai Yunfei took a good twenty steps back, "what's going on?!"

He looked to Xiao Qi, but the bird only shrugged its wings as if to say, "don't ask me."

"Yunfei, don't be alarmed. We soulbeasts just a step away from becoming class sevens gain the ability to speak the human tongue. This much is nothing to be alarmed over." The wolf spoke with a seeming smile.

"I've regained some of my memories, one of which returned the ability of speech." The same hoarse voice spoke again.

The wolf's words were rather simple and held no hostility in them. But even with that, Bai Yunfei was extremely surprised. Not having the wolf speak for an entire year and then being able to do so all of a sudden would do that.

"Chirp chirp!!"

This development was accepted quite warmly by Xiao Qi, who chirped twice in joy. Beating its wings, it flew around the wolf's head excitedly. It chirped several times more as if trying to communicate with it.

The wolf raised its head to speak to Xiao Qi, "Yes, that's correct. After I swallowed the soulgem of the bone-eating treefly, I relearned the ability to talk. Don't be jealous, you'll have your day come soon."

It spoke to Xiao Qi like a friend would chat with another.

Still dazed by this shocking development, Bai Yunfei asked, "Are...are you really the thunderfire wolf? You could talk?"

The wolf turned back to him, "Correct. I knew how to talk before, but I forgot. After swallowing the soulgem of the peak late-stage class six was I able to remember the past and regain the

ability.”

The memories of the past was naturally referring to when he hadn't been transformed into a soulbeast puppet by the Beast Taming School. Since Bai Yunfei thought that the process wiped the soulbeast's mind clean like a sheet of white paper, he figured soulbeasts would have to relearn everything instead of being able to remember what it was like before.

“What....what have you remembered?” Bai Yunfei asked, curious about what the wolf was feeling.

“Just a few memories. The biggest being the ability to speak again.”

Bai Yunfei was still perplexed at this situation. The majority of soulbeasts would only gain human-like intelligence after they became a class seven. There were a few like the bewitching fox which could transform into a human form at the late-stage class six level and converse with humans at the class five level, but those were very rare cases. In a slightly lesser strain, there were other soulbeasts that were inherently gifted with amazing intelligence to speak at the class six level.

Four months ago, Bai Yunfei had even spoke with a peak late-stage class six forest orangutan. It was gentle and smart, and Bai Yunfei had a very nice conversation with it before he left rather than fighting like he did with other soulbeasts. In the end, Bai Yunfei was left with the feeling he had been speaking with an elderly man rather than soulbeast.

Regathering his thoughts, Bai Yunfei asked the wolf, “You said you had something to speak to me about?”

“Correct.” The wolf paused. “Do....do you plan to leave the Soulbeast Forest?”

Bai Yunfei quirked an eyebrow, “I do. I'll get to the class five area through the Crack in the Sky and return to the main continent.”

“.....” His answer brokored no response from the wolf for a while.

“Now that I’ve regained my memories, I’ve remembered that I’ve family here in the class six area. I....I hope that you’ll let me go.....”

The wolf hesitated to speak a few times in its speech, but it made its request in the end. It knew that the strange thing around its neck would force it to obey Bai Yunfei’s commands, so making a request like that wasn’t inherently ‘proper’....

But in the end, it didn’t want to leave the forest again. It wanted to return to the depths of the class six area and return ‘home’ where it could regain the rest of its memories.

“I see now....” Bai Yunfei nodded.

He smiled. “Well alright then. I won’t force you to do anything, you can go home to your family.”

The Beast Taming Ring expanded in size around the wolf’s neck. Detaching itself, the ring flew away from the startled wolf to land around Bai Yunfei’s wrist and shrunk down to fit like a bracelet.

“Ao....” The decisiveness of Bai Yunfei’s actions brought the wolf to a daze. It hadn’t expected Bai Yunfei to so readily agree to its request. In his mind, humans always desired to control a soulbeast as strong as a peak late-stage class six and would refuse to let them go if caught. The wolf knew Bai Yunfei was slightly different than the rest, so it decided to give it a try anyways after it regained its memories.

But never did it imagine that it would have its request accepted so easily.....

“Since we’ve traveled together for so long, aren’t we ‘friends’? Now that your sentience and rationality is back, I don’t want to control you like before. If you’ve your own things, then go do them. I just hope that we’ll meet each other in the future.”

“Friends??” The wolf repeated, staring with wide eyes at Bai

Yunfei. It couldn't tell whether or not Bai Yunfei was being honest, but after a while, the wolf spoke again.

“Thank you.”

It turned around to face north, returning to the forest and its home.

“Chirp chirp!!”

Xiao Qi chirped twice, a hint of sadness in its voice.

The wolf looked to it, its teeth showing in a smile, “May we meet again, Xiao Qi. Thank you for helping me. If not for all those soulgems you gave, I would never have regained my memories.

“I will never forget you, and like Yunfei said, I hope that we meet again. Until then....I hope to be able to repay you for your kindness.”

It looked to Bai Yunfei next, to which Bai Yunfei nodded, “Take care.”

The wolf returned the nod and turned away. It leapt down from the hill and broke into a run to disappear into the forest and away from sight....

Chapter 477: Return to the Class Five Area

Only when the thunderfire wolf's aura was too far away to detect did Bai Yunfei look away with a sigh.

He was reluctant to part with the wolf in all honesty. Having the assistance of a peak late-stage class six was very reassuring and hard to come by, but the wolf had regained most of its intelligence and was no longer like an ordinary soulbeast. He could no longer treat it as an 'animal'. In the end, he couldn't continue with the wolf at his side like this.

If Bai Yunfei was selfish, the wolf wouldn't have been able to run away, though the difficulty in controlling the wolf would be many degrees harder than it was with the blue-eyes wyrm. A melon that was ripped away from the vine so forcibly wouldn't taste as sweet, and Bai Yunfei wasn't interested in forcing the wolf to obey.

There was also Xiao Qi's relationship with the wolf to consider. Bai Yunfei knew they were extremely close, and that Xiao Qi desired for the wolf's 'freedom'. Bai Yunfei was more than willing to let the wolf go with just that reason alone.

“Chirp chirp.....”

Xiao Qi chirped sadly after the thunderfire wolf.

Consoling the bird, Bai Yunfei smiled, “Haha, don't worry. He's not like a regular soulbeast anymore. There won't be many soulbeasts in the class six area that could face him. If he does well enough for himself, he'll be able to become a class seven and become the ruler of his pack....maybe we'll meet him again.”

The bird flew back to Bai Yunfei's shoulder. Still feeling sad over the wolf's departure, it curled up and started to rest.

Bai Yunfei shook his head. The day was only just getting started. The sun was just barely rising up from the horizons, and the night was still there on the opposite side.

It was time for a new day to start....

“Well...let’s get going!” Bai Yunfei stretched his waist, “Let’s head on through the Crack in the Sky and return to the Tianhun Empire!”

.....

It was a simple matter for Bai Yunfei to travel through the stunningly beautiful Crack in the Sky. In no time at all, he was well on his way back to the class five area.

Halfway through the Crack in the Sky, Bai Yunfei came across a few corpses, many of them beautiful young woman even in death. Without a doubt, these women were the students from the Aroma School that the two Soul Exalt brothers had killed.

They only wanted to enter the Soulbeast Forest for training, and yet they had been slaughtered by an unfortunate happenstance.

This too, was the reality of the cruel world of soul cultivators.

Bai Yunfei buried their bodies before he resumed his journey. With how special the Crack in the Sky was, Bai Yunfei made sure to be on the constant move so as to avoid any powerful soul cultivator. The class five area didn’t have any soulbeasts he was afraid of, so Bai Yunfei was able to travel quickly and without concern out from the Crack in the Sky.

Now back in the class five area, Bai Yunfei could feel himself relax. He didn’t fear any of the soulbeasts they met, and Xiao Qi made quick enough work to strike fear in the hearts of every soulbeast there.

Bai Yunfei noticed most of the soulbeasts were just like common animals, soulbeasts that didn’t have the talent to become class sixs, and very different to the class five soulbeasts that once attacked Praestia Pass in the soulbeast wave.

This was actually another peculiar point that could be attributed to the Skywards Mountains. Soulbeasts blessed in birth were

practically nil here since many soul cultivators from Praestia Pass would come through here to reach the class six area. The smarter soulbeasts knew how dangerous those soul cultivators would be, and moved accordingly.

In other words, the soulbeasts left here were drastically ‘weaker’, so many schools and inexperienced soul cultivators liked to come here to train.

On the third day....

Bai Yunfei sat upon a rock, his eyes wide open as he looked at a peculiar sight in front of him.

A....mushroom.

To be more specific, these were mushrooms that were alive....

These were the class three soulbeasts, the leaping mushrooms.

Their caps orange in color and their bodies white, these leaping mushrooms lacked hands and legs. Their caps have two large white eyes and just below it, a tiny tiny ‘mouth’.

Five leaping mushrooms leapt down to Bai Yunfei when he slept. With Bai Yunfei’s lowered soulforce and the lack of ‘hostile’ aura, these soulbeasts weren’t afraid of him. They were far more curious in fact, and leapt all around him to look at the mysterious never before seen ‘being’ in front of them.

Likewise, Bai Yunfei had never seen these type of soulbeasts before. And so for a while, the five mushrooms and one human stared at one another.

“Chirp!!”

All of a sudden, the chirping of Xiao Qi echoed through the forest. Having just returned from its fishing trip, Xiao Qi flew through the forest, ‘startling’ the mushrooms so that they leapt here and there before fleeing into the forest.

A rainbow bolt of light descended onto the area before it dropped

two fatty fishes right in front of Bai Yunfei's eyes. The light came to a stop on Bai Yunfei's shoulders, now as small as a pigeon to stare curiously into the direction the leaping mushrooms fled towards.

"Haha, so the class five area has strange soulbeasts like this too...." Bai Yunfei laughed. What he was talking about wasn't the 'rare' soulbeasts, but the 'harmless' ones, even if they were of a lower level.

But Xiao Qi was very curious. Taking off from his shoulder, Xiao Qi gave chase to the mushrooms. And in time, there was a happy chirp as Xiao Qi caught up to one of them.

Xiao Qi was a mid-stage class six soulbeast. Just its aura alone would frighten a leaping mushroom to tears, let alone try to escape. But as curious as it was, Xiao Qi continued to give chase and observe them like how a child would.

"Ha...." Bai Yunfei shook his head. Xiao Qi was strong, yes, but it was also still just barely a year old. No matter how fast it grew, Xiao Qi was still like a child, and Bai Yunfei knew that it liked to 'play' with other soulbeasts.

The farther Xiao Qi got, the more Bai Yunfei grew reluctant to interrupt it. Taking the two fishes, Bai Yunfei finally decided to follow after it.

The leaping mushrooms weren't very intelligent, and after even after being chased by Xiao Qi for nearly ten minutes, none of the mushrooms knew anything but to run, and none of them had realized that they were being chased in circles....

And Xiao Qi's interest in them didn't wane at all, it seemed. Pretending to be hard at work chasing the mushrooms, Xiao Qi maintained a good few meters behind them and watched as the mushrooms ran themselves into exhaustion.

At last, the five mushrooms leapt through a part of the forest and

came to a stop. Their entire bodies lit up with orange light before they each drilled into the ground and went motionless.

As soon as they were submerged, their auras disappeared.

This way, they looked just like five ordinary mountain mushrooms.

“.....”

Unfortunately for them, Xiao Qi saw what they did. Hovering in the air, Xiao Qi looked on in interest at the ‘play-dead’ actions the mushrooms were doing with great curiosity.

Following from behind, Bai Yunfei could feel the emotions coming from Xiao Qi and how it felt about the mushrooms....

If they saw Xiao Qi staring at them so intently, the five mushrooms surely would’ve sweatdropped by now.

“Haha, don’t scare them so much, Xiao Qi. You’ll frighten them to death.” Unable to stop himself any longer, Bai Yunfei laughed and moved to stop the bird.

Just a little angrily, Xiao Qi came flying back to Bai Yunfei, sparing just a brief look to glance at the pitiful mushrooms.

“Let’s find a place to make lunch. I’ve lost the way with you flying around so much.” Bai Yunfei laughed, “we can find the route back afterwards.”

Taking the two fishes, Bai Yunfei went for the nearby hill for its elevation.

Xiao Qi brightened up at the sound of having lunch. Chirping happily, it flew after Bai Yunfei.

“Roarrrrrr!!!”

From a little ways ahead, Bai Yunfei suddenly heard a furious roar come from the other side of the hill.

“Hm?” Bai Yunfei grew still, his eyes shining curiously. This

sound seemed to have sparked a strange type of reaction in him.

Looking off to the source of the sound, Bai Yunfei said, “Doesn’t that sound a little familiar? Could it be....”

Chapter 478: Meeting Xiao Lan Again

“Chirp chirp!!”

Like Bai Yunfei, Xiao Qi registered this new sound as being familiar. Chirping excitedly as if realizing something, it flew straight towards the source.

“Could it really be?!”

A guess was already on Bai Yunfei’s mind, but he couldn’t be sure. It was a long-shot, but Bai Yunfei just had to find out. Without hesitation, he flew after Xiao Qi to run towards the giant hill with a spurt of soulforce.

Quickly approaching the area now, Bai Yunfei came to realize that there was a battle taking place here, and it was a rough one!

While he wasn’t quite sure of the complete details, Bai Yunfei knew there were Soul Exalts fighting at the very least!

The incoming hill was about a hundred and fifty meters tall and several hundred meters large. Uncaring for the windy route that’d be required to scale it, Bai Yunfei flew high into the air to reach the peak faster and see what was going on.

Already calling Xiao Qi back to him, he and the bird carefully flew to the top of the hill together.

Bai Yunfei hid his soulforce by using the Soul Concealment Art. Xiao Qi could limit the amount of soulforce it had through the cultivation method imparted to it by the Two Winged Kings, but not as much as Bai Yunfei could! At most, it could suppress its soulforce to the levels of a class four, but nothing lower.

When they reached the top, Bai Yunfei made sure to advance forward as carefully as it could. The closer they got to the peak, the more Bai Yunfei could feel the aura coming from the battle. There were at least four late-stage Soul Exalts existences there, one of them being a late-stage class six soulbeast!

Now on the top of the hill, but not completely visible to the fighters, Bai Yunfei took a cautious step forward.

He was a good distance away from the battle, but Bai Yunfei was still close enough to see what exactly was going on.

Three soul cultivators were fighting. From their auras, Bai Yunfei could sense them as being an ice-type late-stage Soul Exalt, a wind-type late-stage Soul Exalt, and a metal-type mid-stage Soul Exalt. Besides the wind-type Soul Exalt, there was also a late-stage class six soulbeast, and another mid-stage class six soulbeast besides the metal-type Soul Exalt!

The three of them were clearly a part of the same group. A little farther away, there was another group of people watching the fight--probably due to not being as strong as the previous three.

Surrounded by the three soul cultivators stood a single soulbeast.

A late-stage class six soulbeast.

Bai Yunfei inhaled sharply. He had the feeling that this was the case earlier, but seeing it right in front of him was still a startling surprise.

“I was right!!”

Bai Yunfei knew this soulbeast, he had seen it before! In fact, they were actually both very familiar with one another!

It was....the blue-eyes wyrm!!

The very same blue-eyes wyrm released from that fiasco with the Black Dragon King a year ago was in this area as well!

“How did it get here? This is strange.” Bai Yunfei muttered under his breath, “And how did it....become a late-stage class six?! Isn’t that a little too fast?”

The blue-eyes wyrm in front of them was a great deal larger than what it used to be a year ago. Now standing at four or five stories tall, the blue-eyes wyrm was now a late-stage class six soulbeast!

Even with so many experts as its opponent, the wyrm was holding its own!

But Bai Yunfei knew the reason why such a case was even happening. These soul cultivators weren't here to kill the wyrm, but to capture it. Otherwise, the wyrm would've died a long time ago.

“Are they here on behalf of their families young master for a soulbeast to contract with?” Bai Yunfei surmised. The group not fighting the blue-eyes wyrm had a richly-dressed young man watching the fight excitedly in the middle.

Having a group of stronger people accompany the younger generation into the Soulbeast Forest and help them find a soulbeast to contract with wasn't rare. It happened many times actually and was a happy benefit to belonging to a major family.

With countless of beings living in the extremely vast Soulbeast Forest, Bai Yunfei came across this situation several times already in the class six area. He wasn't so kind-hearted to interfere and save the soulbeasts, as he didn't care as much as long as it wasn't the Beast Taming School.

He didn't want to interfere in this fight at first, actually. But with this current situation and the one being attacked was the blue-eyes wyrm, the story was different now.

No matter their history in the past, Bai Yunfei couldn't simply watch from the sidelines.

.....

“Chirp!!!!”

As soon as Bai Yunfei decided to enter the fray, a bolt of green and purple flew into the battle first.

Even more impatient than Bai Yunfei, Xiao Qi flew into the battle with a furious chirp.

Unwilling to delay any longer, Bai Yunfei took out the Tempest Sword and flew towards the battle in a burst of green light.

Just for safety, Bai Yunfei applied the Face Change technique to alter his appearance.

The people fighting were by no means weak. As soon as Xiao Qi started for them, they all took in the bird as a threat and immediately gave up their assault on the wyrm in order to retreat to safety.

Under the attentive eyes of the group, Xiao Qi approached them with its wings glowing purple in light. With a furious flap, several hundred bolts of purple lightning stormed down onto the group!

They bounced the elemental defenses of the group one after another. Though failing to do any serious damages, Xiao Qi's attack accomplished its goal as a diversionary attack. Swooping down, Xiao Qi dropped onto the wyrm's head to stare hatefully at the group.

Bai Yunfei followed from behind. Xiao Qi came in as fast as lightning, but it wasn't recklessly attacking the group. It was just standing on top of the wyrm as if passing a warning.

Bai Yunfei came to a stop a little far away from the wyrm. The wind-type and metal type mid-stage Soul Exalts and their soulbeasts stood to Bai Yunfei's left, and the ice-type late-stage Soul Exalt stood to his right, forming a triangle with Bai Yunfei so that the wyrm was in the middle.

Now that he was closer up, Bai Yunfei noticed the two soulbeasts with the Soul Exalts. One was a late-stage class six tornado bird, and the other was a mid-stage class six three-eyed kong bear.

The other group of soul cultivators looked over Bai Yunfei at the same time he did them. When they saw that it was only just a mid-stage Soul Exalt, the group looked relieved. "Brat!" The square-faced metal-type Soul Exalt boomed, "Who are you?! Attacking the

house of Xing will see to your life being forfeit if you're not careful!"

The man was careful not to outright call for Bai Yunfei's head. He needed to know first who Bai Yunfei was; him being so young and yet so strong was strange. And him having a flying soul armament was even stranger. In the case that Bai Yunfei was from a major family, they'd needed to know the facts first to better deal the situation.

"You cannot take this blue-eyes wyrm. It's leaving with me." Bai Yunfei replied, not bothering with their questions.

His lack of response surprised the group, "Haha," the same Soul Exalt barked angrily, "You've guts! Who do you think you are?! Stealing away our blue-eyes wyrm, think of the situation you're in! Then once you do, don't push your luck and scram!"

The man couldn't sense the auras of anyone else in hiding, meaning Bai Yunfei was most likely without companions.

The Tempest Sword Bai Yunfei was riding sparked some lust from the man as well. These type of things were rare and well-wanted by many soul cultivators. And they were in the Soulbeast Forest, if one soul cultivator died here, who would know?

Their response wasn't surprising to Bai Yunfei. He never expected the situation to go well to begin with, his 'interference' was something that didn't make sense to begin with. So the only choice to go from here was the path of violence.

Power is might, and might is everything. That was the iron-clad rule of this world.

"Spare me your bullsh*t and die here!"

Much to his surprise though, the ice-type late-stage Soul Exalt was the first to take action and flew straight for him!

Chapter 479: Carelessness

Bai Yunfei wasn't the only one surprised by the actions of that soul cultivator. The one who spoke on behalf of the Liu looked surprised as well.

“Are these people not together then?” Bai Yunfei thought. Thinking about the matter was pointless, though, and Bai Yunfei decided to ignore the matter. He turned around to let the man come for him.

This man who was attacking Bai Yunfei was Wu Han. He didn't care who Bai Yunfei was or who he was with. All he wanted to do was kill anyone that stood in his path and accomplish the mission given to him by his school. Everything else could go to hell as far as he cared. The mid-earth tier ice soul armament he wielded was similar to the Glacial Pricker, but a little longer and translucent.

This brat in front of him was just a mid-stage Soul Exalt; it wouldn't take more than ten rounds to deal with him.

He was a little surprised at Bai Yunfei's subpar reaction, though. Wu Han had expected to get the drop onto Bai Yunfei when he was speaking to Xing Qiugu and be able to kill him before Bai Yunfei could put up any defenses. But the moment his Arctic Pricker drew close to Bai Yunfei, an orange barrier suddenly stopped it.

Since the enemy attacked first, Bai Yunfei was disinclined to be polite himself. The Cataclysmic Seal protected him from Wu Han's attack as he unleashed the Eighty-one Fold Fist Force onto him!

As Wu Han was about to unleash another attack, Bai Yunfei's fire-wrapped fist moved to strike Wu Han's chest!

Realizing the power behind Bai Yunfei's fist, Wu Han resolved himself to strike first. Leaning backwards, tried to stab at Bai Yunfei's outstretched arm before it could hit him!

“Clang!!”

There was a metallic clinking sound as Wu Han's weapon touched upon Bai Yunfei's arm and gave off sparks. He was astounded, but that was to be normal—how could a mere mid-earth tier soul armament overcome the defenses of the Flameblade Bracer?

“Bang!!”

And with his failure, Wu Han was rewarded with a sturdy punch straight into his chest! Doubling up in pain, Wu Han's body was sent flying several dozen meters away before finally coming to a stop.

Despite how powerful the Eighty-one Fold Fist Force was, it wouldn't be enough to put down a mid-stage Soul Exalt or even incapacitate him. But it could at the very least hurt him to some degree and make him the loser of this particular exchange.

The instantaneous exchange between Bai Yunfei and Wu Han wasn't fully watched by the other people there. As soon as Bai Yunfei started to fight, Xiao Qi flew into action as well. With a clear chirp, it launched a flurry of wind blades towards the other four soulbeasts and soul cultivators.

Throughout all of this, the blue-eyes wyrm was experiencing a myriad of emotions as soon as it saw Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi. It was happy that Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi was here, and even without the Beast Taming Ring to control its movements, the wyrm still fought quite well with Xiao Qi in the past. Moving just half a beat slower than Xiao Qi, the wyrm roared furiously and unleashed three blades of water and swung its tail to slam into the three-eyed kong bear.

Fighting a two-against-five was clearly not in the favor of Xiao Qi and Xiao Lan, Bai Yunfei thought. He looked back to the ice-type Soul Exalt in front of him. Since words were useless now, he'd have to defeat this one as quickly as possible so that he could help Xiao Qi.

He of course, was only thinking about ‘defeating’ them, and not killing. If he could defeat them and take away the blue-eyes wyrm, there’d be no point in doing anything else. What group would so readily admit that they lost like that?

The Cataclysmic Seal pulsed once with red light as the fireseed in it flew out from it and into his chest.

‘Coil’ form, activate!

The Tempest Sword returned to his ring so Bai Yunfei could stand comfortably on the ground and feel as the power of a late-stage Soul Exalt coursed through his body. Stepping forward once, he took off into a sprint towards Wu Han!

Needless to say, Wu Han was shocked. He took the brat in front of him to only be a mid-stage Soul Exalt, and yet, the brat was now boasting the strength of a late-stage Soul Exalt! How was that even possible!

Bai Yunfei’s increase in strength wasn’t the only factor of surprise, his increase in speed caught Wu Han off guard as well! Left with barely any time to react, Wu Han watched as Bai Yunfei reappeared in front of him with his right arm ready to punch!

He blinked, refocusing on the situation at hand. He was a late-stage Soul Exalt, how could he be so easily defeated like so? Twisting his body with his soulforce, Wu Han moved so that the Eighty-one Fold Fist Force traveled right underneath his left armpit!

Wu Han pressed his arm to his side, clenching Bai Yunfei’s right arm to him while bringing the Arctic Pricker in his hand to stab Bai Yunfei through the forehead!

Unflinchingly, Bai Yunfei had the Cataclysmic Seal come forward to block the weapon and prevent Wu Han’s arm from going forward.

Wu Han’s eyes narrowed dangerously. The left arm that was

holding onto Bai Yunfei's arm tightly started to shake before his palm started to gather not elemental ice, but a black mist in it!

His left arm relaxed then as the palm moved forward to grab onto Bai Yunfei's waist.

“Bang! Bang!”

The Cataclysmic Seal and Arctic Pricker collided with one another, blowing his arm back and then him with it. But before he flew too far away, Wu Han's left palm slammed into Bai Yunfei's waist and send him flying back as well.

His eye lit up with glee when he saw his palm connect. With a sneer, he pushed off against the sky and dived straight for Bai Yunfei again!

A strange expression was on Bai Yunfei's face. The palm strike hadn't been too powerful, but there was clearly something else at work, as Bai Yunfei's face was now slightly white with astonishment. For that one moment, Bai Yunfei felt like he had lost control of his body!

Taking advantage of that loss in control, Wu Han drew forward to stab Bai Yunfei through the forehead with his Arctic Pricker!

It was only when the item was practically centimeters away from his forehead did Bai Yunfei finally regain control and leaned towards the right. In the next second, he kicked off away from Wu Han to try and gain some distance.

Seeing that his attack failed to land, Wu Han sneered. Rotating the Arctic Pricker in his hand, he angled downwards and stabbed it into Bai Yunfei's left shoulder!

It drew blood, but Wu Han wasn't finished with him just yet. His left palm came out again and slammed itself into Bai Yunfei's chest!

Bai Yunfei ignored the wound on his left shoulder, as he felt the incoming palm strike to be the bigger concern and met the palm

with a right punch of his own!

“Bang!”

This time, Bai Yunfei was sent flying backwards again, his face even more ashen than before, and his right arm laying uselessly by the side!

To cover his retreat, Bai Yunfei had the Cataclysmic Seal erect a barrier around him. With the added distance between him and Wu Han, Bai Yunfei now had a little more breathing room.

What once seemed like an ordinary battle had ended up with him eating up a loss just barely a minute after it started!

Now that he was at rest, Bai Yunfei regarded Wu Han with a renewed look of surprise, anger, and then....murderous intent!

Clutching at his right arm with a trembling left hand, Bai Yunfei's teeth gritted together for a moment before he spat out three words!

“Soul Refining School!!”

Chapter 480: Battling Yet Another Soul Refiner

That was right! This person he was fighting right now was a student of the Soul Refining School!

And the attack he used twice on Bai Yunfei had clearly been the Soul Refining Palm!

This was the move that burned deeply into Bai Yunfei's mind. There was no way he could forget such a thing!

It had been his mistake to think this man to be a regular soul cultivator with an affinity for ice. He didn't bother to use his Fire-tipped Spear for medium ranged combat and took the 'weak' palm strike to the waist with little regard since he never thought that it'd inject malefic aura into his body and steal away some of his soulforce!

Already, the corrosive energy from the soul refiner's strike was sapping away at his soulforce, making him lose concentration and then the next exchange!

His battle with the soul refiner that destroyed the Nephrite Throne gave him some experience with how to deal with any soul refiner. Thinking about those memories, when he was first struck by the palm and lost concentration, the +12 ring he had helped him snap out of it to protect himself from the next attack.

Although that next exchange caused him to lose some more soulforce, Bai Yunfei had prepared himself for it and didn't lose too much soulforce as a result.

"You're from the Soul Refining School!!" Bai Yunfei spat, his face contorted with anger. "Prepare yourself to die then!"

His hands started to make a series of complicated seals, melding his soulforce appropriately with each one, further elevating his power to even higher levels!

Berserk Mode!!

There would be no mercy for the Soul Refining School. Now at his strongest, Bai Yunfei was fully intent on slaughtering the soul refiner!

He had only been a mid-stage Soul Exalt at the start of the battle. By going into the 'coil' form, he brought himself to the late-stage Soul Exalt level. And now with the Berserk Mode, Bai Yunfei's strength was now at the peak late-stage Soul Exalt level!!

To go any further from here would mean the Soul King realm, but no matter how miraculous the Dual Flame Arts was, they couldn't elevate his strength that high.

His secondary powerup caused yet another storm of attention to be focused on him. Everyone looked to Bai Yunfei in surprise, including Xing Qiugu and his brother Xing Qiufeng, and even the people looking at the battle a good distance away in surprise!

Even Wu Han was affected by this new development. Originally planning to attack Bai Yunfei before he could do anything, Wu Han thought otherwise as soon as Bai Yunfei's strength exploded drastically and leapt backwards in retreat!

He couldn't believe what was going on in front of him. Bai Yunfei had already taken two blows of the Soul Refining Palm, and yet all the damage was already reversed! That wasn't possible!

The Soul Refining Palm would corrode the soulforce of anyone afflicted by it. Anyone hit by it wouldn't even be able to defend themselves from further attacks and would be easy targets to kill afterwards.

But Bai Yunfei was somehow an exception! His reaction to being hit with the Soul Refining Palm didn't look any different than being hit with a burst of elemental energy! Wu Han was thoroughly shocked by this. The Soul Refining Palm had been the move that allowed him to kill any soul cultivator, and never had he

an opponent who shrugged off the move as easily as that.

In addition to that, Bai Yunfei's strength had increased yet again after that!

Him going from a mid-stage Soul Exalt to a late-stage Soul Exalt wasn't too exciting to him, he had confidence in his strength after all. But when Bai Yunfei became a peak late-stage Soul Exalt, Wu Han had to admit he was thoroughly intimidated.

Bai Yunfei's transformation was even more surprising to see than his initial appearance!

Wu Han had retreated in fear, but Bai Yunfei wasn't willing to give him even that. The Berserk Mode wouldn't last long—ten minutes at the very most—so he had to finish this battle as soon as possible or risk being in danger!

Now that he knew the person in front of him was a soul refiner, he had only one goal: kill!

Calling his Fire-tipped Spear to him, Bai Yunfei moved after Wu Han. Though he had his head start, it was only a hundred meters at most, Bai Yunfei could shrink that distance very quickly!

Wu Han narrowed his eyes venomously, though his retreat maintained that speed. His arms readied themselves in front of him before he pushed outwards, forming hundreds of icicles to fire off at Bai Yunfei. The Arctic Pricker was replaced by a golden disk with many blades at the edge. Bringing his arm back, he tossed the disk forward to slice down Bai Yunfei, whistling and whirring as it traveled through the air.

Bai Yunfei continued forwards, his left arm pointing the Cataclysmic Seal forward, growing in size as it flew!

Growing to the size of a great wall, the Cataclysmic Seal met the hundreds of icicles to smash into it without letting a single one through it.

“Clank!” The first to hit the Cataclysmic Seal had been the

golden disk. Unlike the icicles that either disintegrated into powder or fell down, the golden disk bounced off of the brick back towards its owner without leaving a mark!

And without losing any speed in the slightest, the Cataclysmic Seal continued forwards!

Wu Han paled. He expected to slow down Bai Yunfei by just a little bit, but he didn't expect that his attacks would be so effectively countered. Not willing to take the Cataclysmic Seal head on, Wu Han tossed his arms wide to allow for white light to appear behind his back, forming a pair of icy wings almost instantly!

"Bang!" Nicely synchronized with a heavy kick, his wings flapped together to send him soaring a good two hundred meters into the air and dodged the Cataclysmic Seal.

Before he could sigh in relief, however, Wu Han saw a figure suddenly leap into the air with him. Reaching the same height he did, the figure suddenly dashed perpendicularly to greet him head on!

Practically furious with how the battle was going, Wu Han decided to hold his ground on this one. His soulforce started to flow strangely in his body as he withdrew the Arctic Pricker again. He flourished it strangely in front of himself before stabbing at Bai Yunfei as if thrusting a spear!

Elemental ice whirled around Wu Han before gathering around the Arctic Pricker. Crackling as it manifested into solid form, the ice lengthened the Arctic Pricker so that it became an icy spear a good dozen meters long! The ice continued down the spear and connected it to his arm, making it so that the spear and arm was as one to strike Bai Yunfei dead in the heart!

But the stranger thing was that within the icy spear, there was a sliver of near-invisible black energy.....

Arctic Strike!!

This was the soul skill Wu Han could use. It was his greatest attack in his repertoire, and it was in his belief that the move was freakishly hard to dodge once locked upon!

And as long as the target was struck by it, death was for certain!

Chapter 481: Strike to Kill, Intimidate to Scare Away

“Pcht!!”

To Wu Han's pleasant surprise, Bai Yunfei 'slammed' into the icy spear without without dodging! The spear perforated Bai Yunfei, running through his back so that he was completely impaled on it!

His excitement didn't last long, however. Not even a second after Bai Yunfei impaled himself, Wu Han watched as Bai Yunfei's body fade away into thin air!

Bai Yunfei's body was gone without a trace! It was almost as if he had been an illusion since the very beginning.

Then the next thing he knew, a burning heatwave in the shape of two crimson spears flew at him from his left and right!

The +12 additional effect of the Fire-tipped Spear, Doppelganger!

Left with very little time to think, Wu Han summoned even more elemental ice from his essence iceseed to form an icy carapace over his body. In another burst of energy, his right arm swung to the left, slamming his icy spear into the enemy to his right.

“Bang!” The spear slammed into Bai Yunfei's waist, sending him flying a good distance away before disappearing from sight just like the one that had been impaled!

The spear coming at him from the left was left unimpeded however. It struck the icy carapace of elemental ice over Wu Han's body, and then....stabbed through it without a problem!

It was as if the carapace didn't even exist! Shearing through it like it was nothing, the spear stabbed Wu Han straight into the heart!

“Pccht!!”

The following sound was like a clap of thunder to Wu Han's ears. His body froze up in pain, and lowering his head down slightly, he looked on as a red spear perforated him where his heart was in dread.

The +13 additional effect of the Fire-tipped Spear, the ability to ignore elemental defenses!

“Boom!!”

There was an explosion as the elemental ice around Wu Han's body lost the soulforce binding it together. Exploding into thousands of tiny pieces of ice, the ice broke away to reveal Bai Yunfei standing near Wu Han with his spear stabbed straight through the latter.

Both Xing Qiugu and Xing Qiufeng felt as if a bombshell had been dropped onto their heads when they saw Wu Han killed by Bai Yunfei.

Then, Bai Yunfei turned his head and stalked straight for them.

How strange it was, that the fire in Bai Yunfei's eyes were burning hotter than anything, but all the two felt was a chilling frost in their own hearts. Feelings of apprehension shot straight through their hearts when they saw Bai Yunfei stare at them, and the killing intent he directed towards them!

These men were with the Soul Refining School. Even if they weren't a part of the school, they were just as bad! So it was without remorse that Bai Yunfei decided to kill them as well.

The late-stage Soul Exalt Xing Qiufeng was the first to respond. Sensing Bai Yunfei's murderous rage, his face went pale and took several steps back in retreat!

“That Wu Han has nothing to do with the house of Liu!! He is not one of us! Young sire, spare the innocent from your wrathful slaughter! The blue-eyes wyrm is yours, we shall leave at once!” He cried out, trying to appease Bai Yunfei's anger. He could guess that

there was something between Wu Han and Bai Yunfei to cause such hatred, so he tried to remove themselves away from the equation to avoid Bai Yunfei's wrath.

Bai Yunfei stared frostily at them, not saying a word and not moving at all. Xiao Qi and the blue-eyes wyrm did nothing either and retreated to move behind Bai Yunfei.

When Bai Yunfei didn't come over, Xing Qiufeng sighed in relief. Without delay, he and Xing Qiugu took the others and left the place.

Wu Han's death startled them more than they'd like. He had been a late-stage Soul Exalt, and yet all it took to kill him was a short three minutes! And the one to kill him was a man who looked like he was only a midstage Soul Exalt! And then in the middle of the battle, the very same midstage Soul Exalt became a peak late-stage Soul Exalt with a snap of his fingers.

Everyone had the same thought when he did that: to escape from the area as fast as possible.

Watching as the group left, Bai Yunfei did nothing else but wait. He knew these people weren't from the Soul Refining School, so fighting them wasn't wise. It wouldn't be easy to kill them all, and if by chance he didn't and his Berserk Mode ran out, he'd be left in very dire straits.

He only wished to save the blue-eyes wyrm and kill the soul refiner. Aside from that, Bai Yunfei no longer felt inclined to kill the men from the Liu.

Dispelling his Berserk Mode, Bai Yunfei allowed for the stockpiled soulforce in his Violet Soul Ring to fill his body, making up for the soulforce he used in such a short amount of time.

He tossed Wu Han's corpse unceremoniously to the ground as if he would with trash before returning back to his normal expression.

He of course, pocketed the space ring and weapon Wu Han had first.

He looked to Xiao Qi and the blue-eyes wyrm behind it.

“Let’s leave this place first.”

.....

Half a day later, by a small river relatively far away from the hill.

Bai Yunfei sat on top of a large stone, watching as the fish he caught earlier cook on top of the open fire. Not too far away, Xiao Qi and the blue-eyes wyrm were ‘conversing’ with one another through a series of chirps and grumbles.

Halfway through their talks, the blue-eyes wyrm was able to smell the cooked piece of fish Bai Yunfei was cooking and walked towards Bai Yunfei, its mouth slightly agape with drool.

“Ah....after a year of not seeing you, you seem to gotten smarter!” Bai Yunfei laughed. He tossed the fished over to the wyrm, who caught it in his claws before devouring it.

He watched the blue-eyes wyrm eat curiously. As he said, the wyrm in front of him was clearly a lot ‘smarter’ than from a year ago. Whether it was the light in its eyes or its human-like characteristics, the wyrm was acting a lot more like how the red magiboar back in the Crafting School acted. This was a sign that its intelligence was at a very high level.

How strange. What kind of action would it take for such a drastic change like this to occur within a year?

And yet, its increase in strength was the real anomaly. Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi were already considered deviants with how quickly they improved by being able to improve from the early-stage class six/Soul Exalt level to the midstage level. But the blue-eyes wyrm was able to go from an early-stage class six to a late-stage class six....

“What in the world did you come across?” Bai Yunfei asked, “We said goodbye to each other a very long ways away from here, why in the world are you here?”

Chapter 482: There's Meat if I Follow You

Obviously, Bai Yunfei knew nothing about the matter with the Black Dragon King's death, or that the blue-eyes wyrm came back to lap up all of his 'dragon blood'.

The blood of the late-stage class seven Black Dragon King was something the Soul Kings all disregarded as being unimportant, but to the blue-eyes wyrm, it was a miracle drug capable of strengthening the 'dragon' blood in it and alter it without a doubt.

To the wyrm, the Black Dragon King's blood was very precious. It could alter its body to become renew itself at worst and turn it into a variant at best. Either way, it empowered him and awakened its intelligence.

As for why it was here of all places, the wyrm spent countless months trying to get used to all the blood it sucked up. It had been hard, and the pain it felt was immense. It ran this way and that as it tried to deal with all the changing it was experiencing, and after meeting so many strong soulbeasts, the wyrm fled towards the class five area. From there, it headed west to the 'starting point' of the Skywards Mountains and then south from there.

As it gradually got used to the Black Dragon King's blood, its strength and intelligence increased proportionately. But by then, it was lost and knew not where it was. With the barrier that was the Skywards Mountains, the wyrm could only wander about in the class five area. It had no enemies there, so it was free to roam wherever it want like it was today.

But today, it came across a group of strong soul cultivators and was nearly resigned to its fate until Bai Yunfei and Xiao Qi came down to save it like a pair of guardian angels.

The wyrm didn't tell Xiao Qi about the Black Dragon King's blood of course. It knew that there were some things the wyrm needed to keep 'secret'.

.....

“Eh? What was that?”

Bai Yunfei quirked an eyebrow to look at Xiao Qi. The message transmitted in his mind from Xiao Qi had him in surprise.

He looked to the blue-eyes wyrm then, “You want to leave the Soulbeast Forest with us?!”

“Wuu~!!” The wyrm nodded energetically.

“Hm....” Bai Yunfei hummed in surprise. He stared at the wyrm a little longer, “Why do you want to go with us? What are you going to do?”

“Wuuu....” It responded with small gestures. Since it wasn’t able to talk, Bai Yunfei was naturally unable to understand. But knowing that there was something the wyrm was trying to say, he looked to Xiao Qi so that it could ‘translate’.

Xiao Qi cocked its head at the wyrm, it chirped several times and then began to recite to Bai Yunfei as best as it could.

“It’s boring in the forest,”

“The outside must be so fun”

“There’s food to be had with you”....

“.....”

The intelligence the wyrm was showing was clearly levels higher than the average soulbeast, and just like the thunderfire wolf. But whereas the wolf wanted to return to the depths of its forest, the blue-eyes wyrm wanted to ‘explore’ the world. Every flower had its different shade of color, and soulbeasts were no different.

“You really want to go with us?” He asked again.

It nodded.

“To leave the Soulbeast Forest and go to where the humans are?”

Another nod.

“Are you sure?”

Nod.

“....”

After looking at the wyrm for so long, Bai Yunfei suddenly broke out into a smile. “Alright then, you can come with us. But I’m warning you now, if you want to come with us, you’ll have to listen to me, otherwise, I don’t care what happens to you. The many powerful soul cultivators outside the forest is something I’m sure you’re aware of, if you cause trouble, I won’t care if they take you away.”

“Wuwu!!” The wyrm cocked its head in surprise at first before nodding furiously, as if to say, “You’re the boss, of course!”

Bai Yunfei laughed. Watching as Xiao Qi started to ‘chat’ with the wyrm, Bai Yunfei felt happy. He never thought that after the wolf left them, they’d have the wyrm join. It didn’t even need the Beast Taming Ring in order for it to be obedient to it; that was the real shocker.

He’d never know that all it took for such a rare late-stage class six soulbeast to follow him would be such an ‘inconceivable’ story.

.....

The next day, Bai Yunfei continued south just like he planned. He wanted to get back to the Tianhun Empire without delay.

Now that the blue-eyes wyrm was with them, Xiao Qi was a lot happier than before. Very quickly, the two were established as ‘good’ friends once again, and many a times Bai Yunfei found himself following after their antics. Like how they would bully other soulbeasts. Their actions were practically indistinguishable to how playful humans would be.

Gradually making their way through the class five area into the class four, the group found nothing being able to block their way. Danger was nothing more but a topic of a bygone time. Every so

often, they'd come across a soul cultivator, but even they would shy away when they saw the blue-eyes wyrm. Some were more willing to try and fight it, but when they saw Bai Yunfei there, they grew pacified.

But while there were a few that knew their boundaries, there were also several that needed to be taught a lesson.

Traveling without trouble, Bai Yunfei and the two soulbeasts only needed two months before they were back in the class three area.

That night.

Bai Yunfei found a small cave to rest for the night. After traveling for three days non-stop, they needed a rest.

By the cave entrance, Xiao Qi and Xiao Lan were both resting now that they finished their meals. Bai Yunfei sat within the cave, his hands holding onto something to look at.

In his hands was fist-sized pink colored soulgem. It distributed a slightly hot air that also gave the illusion of being stuck in a dream almost.

This was the mid-stage class six soulgem Bai Yunfei got from the bewitching fox.

A soulgem that had the elements for illusion and fire.

A bewitching fox was a very rare soulbeast that would hard to come by every hundred years. This meant its soulgem was even more priceless than several heaven tier soul armaments. With that, the amount of benefit Bai Yunfei could get from absorbing it would be plenty. It was a true treasure among his hauls, and Bai Yunfei was thinking about using it to make a soul armament.

The illusion element was an extremely rare element to both soul cultivators and soulbeasts, just like the space element.

Using the illusion type soulgem to make a soul armament was

definitely possible. And to use it would grant the soul armament an affinity for illusions or gain resistance towards it, making the soul armament even more valuable.

There was a 'rule' in the Crafting School in regards to the continent. A class five illusion soulgem could be exchanged for a high-earth tier soul armament! And a class six illusion soulgem could be traded for a low-heaven tier! And a class seven for a mid-heaven!!

As for those higher than class sevens....those didn't even need to be said.

Obtaining a mid-stage class six illusion soulgem would mean a great deal of power for Bai Yunfei in the long run. If not for the fact that it wasn't safe for him to craft in the Crack in the Sky, Bai Yunfei would've made a soul armament from it already.

He calmed himself down. It wouldn't do to recklessly craft soul armaments. He'd need to make the proper arrangements first.

Crafting soul armaments also relied on the state of 'mind'.

And today, Bai Yunfei had to admit his state of mind felt pretty good today.

Chapter 483: New Equipment and New 'Attribute'

Surely, there'd be no danger to be had in the class three area. Since he was on the verge of returning to the Tianhun Empire, Bai Yunfei figured his future travels would be a lot 'safer' than the Soulbeast Forest was. Now was a good time to make himself another soul armament and increase his strength.

Giving the idea a lot more thought, bai Yunfei finally decided.

He waved his hand, bringing out the lightning fire cauldron with a plop.

The seismic waves from the cauldron falling to the ground jostled Xiao Qi and Xiao Lan. Giving them a warning, Bai Yunfei said, "Xiao Qi, Xiao Lan, I'll be crafting now. Stand guard at the entrance and don't disturb me."

The two soulbeasts nodded. Standing guard over the cave wouldn't be a problem for them.

The Cataclysmic Seal popped out from the Violet Soul Ring and spat out the fireseed within it. Entering the cauldron, the fireseed raised the temperature of the flames in it.

Carefully, Bai Yunfei thought about what materials would go best with the illusion soulgem. One by one, he took them out, and then a white stone three times bigger than his fist.

Equipment Grade: High Earth

Elemental Affinity: None

Equipment Effect 1: Allow the successful upgrade of any equipment +10 and under once.

Equipment Effect 2: Increase the tier of an equipment when crafting by one (High Earth tier being the highest).

Cannot be upgraded

This was a +10 Upgrade Stone. Its usages in terms of upgrading wasn't substantial, but its second equipment effect was quite useful when crafting.

He gained eight +10 Upgrade Stones from the Nephrite Throne and used three already. With him using another one today, that meant he'd have only four left. Aside from that, he used a +11 Upgrade Stone as well.

In total, Bai Yunfei had these four +10 Upgrade Stones, two +11 Upgrade Stones, and a +12 Upgrade Stone.

That +11 Upgrade Stone had been used to upgrade the Luck Pendant, since he figured 'luck' was a mysterious, yet miraculous thing. It had plenty of benefits, and Bai Yunfei had faith it'd help him.

And after he upgraded it, Bai Yunfei found out that the pendant increased the probability of his effects activating by a decent amount. Furthermore, Bai Yunfei came across plenty of great treasures and such in his one year of travel, all of which he attributed to 'luck'.

Bai Yunfei felt tempted to use the +12 Upgrade Stone. He wanted to see what it was like, and what it would do, but he managed to stave off that temptation in the end.

He only had one of those, so it'd do him well not to waste it.

Crafting a mid-earth tier soul armament wasn't a problem for him with his strength. Combined with the upgrade stone, it seemed possible to craft even a high-earth tier soul armament. Crafting an accessory would be hard as well, but Bai Yunfei could guarantee it being a mid-earth tier at the very least.

Yes.

Bai Yunfei was going for another accessory to craft.

Both his hands had rings already, and rings were already in surplus. He couldn't swap off the Luck Pendant, and neither did

Bai Yunfei want an earring.

So that meant he'd craft a bracelet.

Decided, Bai Yunfei focused onto the cauldron. The upgrade stone in his hand turned into white powder to be sucked into the soulgem, which was then deposited into the cauldron along with the other materials.

The crafting process was an arduous one (and this author is sure no one is interested in the details), fire and sparks filled the cave as Bai Yunfei focused on his craft.....

He didn't dare be sloppy. What he was using was the illusion soulgem, so every single step had to be taken with great caution to ensure a high quality end product.

Outside the cave, the night was replaced by day, and then day replaced by night once again....

It took Bai Yunfei two whole days and three nights to craft!!

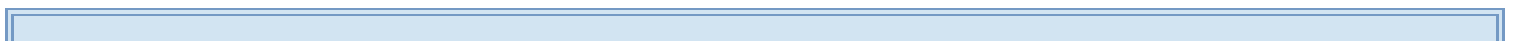
In the end, Bai Yunfei finally finished crafting near the dawn of the third day. The cauldron lit up gloriously with a light that illuminated the entire cave. It died away back into the cauldron, leaving behind a pink light that casted a hallucogenic atmosphere in the cave.

Forehead slick with sweat, Bai Yunfei sighed in relief. He was tired, but also excited. Waving his right hand, he watched as the item within the cauldron flew out.

The object flew out from the cauldron and into Bai Yunfei's right hand, shining with light as it did. When the light died away, a plain bracelet was left in his palm.

Surprisingly, the bracelet was transparent in color, like a clear crystal.

Uncaring for the physical appearance of the bracelet, however, Bai Yunfei picked it up to inspect its stats.



Unique Equipment
Equipment Grade: High Earth
Elemental Affinity: Illusion, Fire
+800 Spirit
Soul Compatibility: 8%
Equipment Effect: Reduce damage taken by illusions by 40%.
Upgrade Requirement: 110 Soulpoints

Bai Yunfei’s eyes sparkled joyfully, “Haha!! It worked! A high-earth tier soul armament that resists illusions! And 8% soul compatibility already! Wahaha! My ability to craft accessories has improved a lot!!”

His excitement had been so uncharacteristic of him that Xiao Qi and Xiao Lan looked up in surprise, had he gone insane from crafting?

But Bai Yunfei didn’t say anything like ‘I am the strongest in the world!!’. Instead, he was looking at the bracelet so lovingly that Xiao Qi felt a sudden chill.

“Hehe, gain resistance to illusions....it’s a little more specific than just saying mind-based attacks, so that means it won’t work against those. But having it work against illusions is still stupendous! Not bad at all....” He nodded happily.

“And now comes the important part....”

“Upgrade!”

Upgrade Successful

Unique Equipment
Equipment Grade: High Earth
Elemental Affinity: Illusion, Fire
Upgrade Level: +1
+800 Spirit
Additional Attribute: +2 Charm
Soul Compatibility: 8%
Equipment Effect: Reduce damage taken by illusions by 40%.

“.....”

Bai Yunfei was floored. With just one upgrade, he discovered yet another never-before-seen attribute!

“Cha—charm?!” He stammered. “You can improve an attribute like that too?!”

First was ‘luck’, and now came ‘charm’. What else would be next? Wasn’t this getting a little ridiculous? What could the two of those do if put together?

As confused as he was, Bai Yunfei knew he had to continue upgrading.

A while later.....

Chapter 484: Mental Link and the Charm Bracelet

Upgrade Successful

Unique Equipment

Equipment Grade: High Earth

Elemental Affinity: Illusion, Fire

Upgrade Level: +10

+800 Spirit

Additional Attribute: +25 Charm

Soul Compatibility: 25%

Equipment Effect: Reduce damage taken by illusions by 40%.

+10 Additional Effect: Consume soulforce to establish a mental link with anyone within a kilometer.

Upgrade Requirement: 110 Soulpoints

At last, the +10 additional effect appeared for Bai Yunfei to see, but the effect was far more astonishing than he expected.

“Mental link?? What is that?!” He raised an eyebrow. He assumed that the additional effect would have to do with illusions to some degree, like being able to use an illusion to attack. But instead, this strange effect was in its place.

It was a short, but not simple effect. He didn’t understand the wording at all. “Mental....link....does that mean I can link my mind with another....? Is that how it works?

“But if I do that, what’s the point of it?”

No matter how much he thought about it, Bai Yunfei couldn’t think of an answer. He’d have to experiment with it.

Taking off the spirit bracelet and replacing it with the new one, Bai Yunfei felt the effects of the equipment wash over him. Aside

from the increase in soulforce, he didn't feel any different in terms of 'charm'. Narrowing his eyes, he looked to where Xiao Qi and Xiao Lan were.

Establishing a mental link probably meant being able to communicate with one another. He was already able to do that with Xiao Qi, so Xiao Lan would be the experimentee here.

Focusing on the blue-eyes wyrm, Bai Yunfei thought of something. The bracelet on his left arm flashed brightly with light as the familiar feeling of an effect being activated was felt.

After that, Bai Yunfei began to sense something more was added to his mind....

At the same time, Xiao Lan suddenly looked left and right as if something had poked it.

“What?! Who?! What’s going on?!”

A panicked voice spoke out in Bai Yunfei's mind the same time the wyrm leapt to its feet. Or perhaps it was better to say Bai Yunfei felt the voice in his mind, rather than heard it, since his ears wasn't the one that did the hearing. It was hard to describe, but Xiao Lan's voice wasn't.

It sounded like a hoarse young male that wasn't yet done growing.

Like Xiao Lan, Bai Yunfei had been so startled he flew to his feet. His mind raced furiously with thoughts as he regarded the wyrm in front of him

“Xiao Lan?” He thought.

Straight away, Xiao Lan turned around to look at him, struck into shock by what was going on.

“Are....are you talking to me?”

The line Bai Yunfei heard in his mind felt very fitting with the emotions Xiao Lan was showing on its face. Clearly, it was

‘speaking’ to him.

Now that he understood a little bit more about what was going on, Bai Yunfei’s eyes flew back down to the bracelet he wore, and then back to the wyrm, “Can you hear what I’m ‘saying’?”

Xiao Lan nodded its head frantically, “I can! How did you get in my head? How do you know what I’m thinking?”

Laughter nearly burst out from Bai Yunfei’s mouth. “Haha! So this is what it’s meant to be?! Doesn’t this mean that as long as I’m willing, I can communicate with anyone I want?!”

Since this thought wasn’t directed towards Xiao Lan, the wyrm didn’t hear it. As things would appear, it seemed that even what wanted to be said could be moderated. As long as he wanted someone to hear something, they would.

“Chirp chirp?”

At that moment, Xiao Qi’s curious chirps alerted Bai Yunfei to a new understanding.

It was plain to see that Xiao Qi didn’t know what Bai Yunfei and Xiao Lan were doing....in other words, no outside party would be able to tell there was even a mental link taking place!

This was a great discovery! Looking to Xiao Qi, Bai Yunfei activated the bracelet’s effect again to bring the bird into the mental link.

“What’s going on with you two, why are you both acting so strange?”

Yes, this was a thought as well. But compared to the blue-eyes wyrm, this thought ‘sounded’ a lot younger, like a small boy.

Again, Xiao Lan leapt up in surprise when it heard the ‘voice’. Like a startled cat, it swiveled to look at Xiao Qi, “How are you in my head too?!”

Bai Yunfei’s eyes brightened again, the mental link wasn’t

limited to just one person!

“Haha, don’t panic, you two. I did this.” Bai Yunfei’s lips curled into a smile, “I’ve just crafted a soul armament that can link our minds together. We can talk by sending our thoughts to each other now.”

“Minds? Link? Sending thoughts???” Xiao Lan and Xiao Qi both tilted their heads in confusion; Bai Yunfei’s mind was hit with a wave of question marks.

Smiling, Bai Yunfei ‘said’, “Well, don’t worry about it right now. Just know that we can talk with each other from now on. It’s more convenient.”

Being able to communicate through a method like this was so convenient that there was probably nothing else that could beat it. It stood on levels higher than the bond that connected Bai Yunfei to Xiao Qi with their soul contract. A soul contract enabled the two to being able to communicate to a certain degree, but it wasn’t as clear as being able to send their thoughts to each other.

And it was very different to using the Beast Taming Ring. A limited degree of conversation could be had between him and Xiao Lan then through it, but it was on the level of a master sending an order to their slave. Through this bracelet, Bai Yunfei didn’t need to send his soulsense into Xiao Lan’s mindspace.

Through the bracelet, there was an invisible connection between the parties that made communication easily possible.

Bai Yunfei would be able to communicate with the two soulbeasts through this method in the future. It was an interested way of communication, and to Bai Yunfei, it felt similar to having a nice chat at a tea party of sorts.

He did feel his soulforce constantly draining away from his body the longer he maintained the connection though.

That meant maintaining the mental link required a constant

supply of soulforce. This first usage of the effect had already taken a decent amount from him, but Bai Yunfei reckoned that with constant usage, he'd be able to grow accustomed to it and optimize the soulforce drain.

Still, knowing just this much already gave Bai Yunfei no small amount of glee. This effect wasn't something that could help him grow stronger or help him last longer in a battle, but it was still something that had its uses....

Speaking via the soul was something only Soul Kings could do, and even then, not all of them were capable of it. It requires a great deal of talent in order to do so, but Bai Yunfei's 'mental link' accomplished the exact same thing by operating under a completely different set of principles. He'd make use of this to the best of his abilities....

Touching at the translucent bracelet on his wrist, Bai Yunfei smiled. "It's a little different to what I was expecting, but it's still great...."

"I still don't know what 'charm' does, but a special attribute like this can be studied later."

Thinking for a moment, Bai Yunfei finally decided upon a name.

"Well, I guess I'll call this the....Charm Bracelet!"

Chapter 485: Return to the Empire, the Northern Ridge Province (First)

Year 2014 of the Tianhun Calender. Twentieth day of the third month. Ventia City in the Northern Ridge Province.

The Northern Ridge Province is one of the provinces that bordered the northern edge of the Tianhun Empire. As one of the smallest provinces in the empire, it had three other provinces, including Praestia Pass and the Northern Mist Province neighboring it.

This specific province hadn't many soul cultivators, and the warlord overseeing it was only an early-stage Soul King. Coincidentally, he was the only Soul King in the province.

Its most prosperous city was Ventia City. Rather than being at the center, like most major cities, this one sat at the edge of the province—and the empire by extension.

Right at this moment, it was high noon in the most luxurious two-story restaurant in Ventia City.

Despite its relatively low number of inhabitants in the province, Ventia City saw to a good deal of commoners, and the House of Fresh Viands enjoyed a healthy business in general.

But today, the second story to the restaurant seemed a little chilly.

It had a floor capacity of twenty tables, but only two of them had customers. And of those two tables, only three clients in total....

Standing at the counter of that floor was the proprietor of the restaurant. From his position at the counter, he watched the window-facing clients nervously, but respectfully. Right besides him were several other waiters who were even more nervous than he was. Every so often, they snuck a glance at the clients and then away in fear.

The reason why it was so empty and so cold was because of that one customer. Everyone else in the restaurant had been scared off.

It wasn't that the young man himself was scary! He was just eating his meal in peace. And neither was the bird next to him the problem....

It was other one to the opposite of the bird that was the problem. A terrifying 'monster' was sat there at the table, devouring a plate of roasted meat by the plate.

The proprietor knew that these monsters were called 'soulbeasts', and that they were not too far away from the 'Soulbeast Forest' where these things lived. The proprietor himself met with a good amount of soul cultivators, but never had he seen a soulbeast like this before.

And what a terrifying soulbeast it was!! If it roared, the entire restaurant would definitely see itself being shaken to its core. Its terrifying aura was practically suffocating.

It was exactly because it roared once before that all of the customers filed out of the restaurant—aside from the two beautiful young ladies sitting at another table, how bold they were!

The proprietor didn't know if they were just unafraid, or if they didn't even know about the situation they were in.

All he wanted was for the soul cultivator to hurry up and leave.

The sooner he left, the sooner the proprietor could thank the heavens and earth.

.....

As of course, the soul cultivator eating here today was Bai Yunfei.

Nearly two years had gone by since his arrival in Praestia Pass in the first place. At last, he was back in the Tianhun Empire.

Ventia City was the first city he came across.

He felt like a hermit returning from a life of seclusion in the

mountains. Now back among his fellow humans, Bai Yunfei felt himself grow excited.

It had been nearly two full years since he had a 'decent' cooked meal. His first 'coming-back' feast definitely had to be carefully picked, so Bai Yunfei decided to head for the best shop in the city to eat like a king there.

But the problem that happened afterwards made Bai Yunfei feel a little helpless.

That problem had been the blue-eyes wyrm.

Xiao Lan had been smart enough to shrink itself to what looked like a baby Agumon (For those who haven't seen Digimon, imagine a small T-rex), but that didn't stop the commoners of the city from pointing and whispering to one another. Everywhere they went, they conversed with one another, and some were even scared of it.

But there hadn't been any major problems....until they entered the restaurant.

Xiao Lan had been even more excited to see humanity—it had never seen it before compared to Bai Yunfei. Looking this way and that as they walked into the city, the wyrm was scared at first with so many humans looking at it.

With time, the wyrm realized that most of the humans were far weaker than it was, practically as weak as the class one or two soulbeasts back in the Soulbeast Forest. The strongest he felt was still on the same level as a class three or four, which was still not a threat to it. Knowing that, the wyrm loosened up, waving its tail happily as it walked and talked with Xiao Qi.

There had been a small 'commotion' when they arrived at the restaurant. A drunken Soul Personage had come across them and immediately decided then and there that he wanted Xiao Lan. In his drunken stupor, he cried out a 'This soulbeast is mine!' and moved to attack.

But what kind of soulbeast was Xiao Lan? Before it met Bai Yunfei, it had been the sovereign of its small area of Soulbeast Forest. A sovereign that killed both human and soulbeast without even flinching. It may have awakened its intelligence to human levels, but its terrible nature wasn't gone. If not for Bai Yunfei to warn it not to hurt others, the wyrm would've swallowed the poor man whole.

So instead, it gave a terrible roar, and then....

The soul cultivator sobered up instantly. Scrambling back to its feet, he ran out from the restaurant along with everyone else there....

Feeling as though there was nothing he could do about the situation, Bai Yunfei sat down at a table. Ordering several dishes, he waited for them to arrive before digging in.

.....

So all that was left on the second floor of the restaurant was Bai Yunfei and his soulbeasts who sat at one table, and two young ladies who sat at another.

The older of the two looked to be about twenty-five years old with silky-black hair, though the aura she gave off felt very mature. She wore a velvety light-green robe that didn't entirely show her snowy-white skin. There was a small pink birthmark right above her left eyebrow, but it added to her beauty.

The younger one looked to be in her late teens at the very youngest. She wore a blue robe over her delicate figure, and her hair was sprawled over her shoulders. Her cheeks were slightly-red, perhaps due to the spicy food she was eating, but all in all, she looked quite pretty.

“Senior Yu Li, what is that soulbeast? It looks scary-and a class six too!”

The younger one spoke to the older. Her eyes were wide open to

stare at the blue-eyes wyrm, but they were curious rather than fearful.

“It’s a late-stage class six.” The one named Yu Li replied, casting a glance over to Bai Yunfei’s direction. “Yuexia, don’t stare at it. That’s not a docile soulbeast, there’ll be trouble if you anger it.”

“Oh....” Nangong Yuexia replied meekly, “Is that the contracted soulbeast to that brother there? He looks like he’s only an early-stage Soul Ancestor, that’s weaker than me—why is a late-stage class six his contracted soulbeast then?”

She pointed a finger to Bai Yunfei, whose soulforce was currently suppressed to the levels of an early-stage Soul Ancestor.

“Is he only that? I wouldn’t think so....” Yu Li replied. She couldn’t tell if Bai Yunfei was hiding his strength or not, but someone who traveled with a late-stage class six soulbeast surely had more than meets the eye.

“Let’s get going, Yuexia. We’re heading for the Soulbeast Forest as soon as you finish eating. Let’s hope to find you a soulbeast to contract with soon.” Yu Li smiled.

“Yes!” Nangong Yuexia smiled back before digging back into her food with renewed gusto.

Chapter 486: The Second Young Master of the House of Xing in Ventia City (Second)

Like the other two women, Bai Yunfei had noticed he wasn't the only party still left here. He could tell their strength was pretty strong for their age, but he wasn't very interested in striking up a conversation with them. He just wanted to eat his fill and then go out to buy stuff before retiring for the night.

“Where's the owner?! Come on out at once! We're here to book this place, bring out your best dishes at once!”

A pompous voice boomed from the floor beneath before the sounds of footsteps hurried up to the second floor.

Bai Yunfei narrowed his eyes.

A distressed expression emerged onto the proprietor's face. Forcing himself to smile, he whirled around to go and greet the newcoming group.

“Haha, we are honored by your presence, young master Xing. Had the young master warned us earlier, this humble one would've prepared something already....”

He spoke, appealing to the group as best as he could.

“Do I need to tell you when I'm coming over? I've booked this place today, so kick out everyone else! And bring out the good wine and food for my good friends and I!” Xing Luo didn't bother to even look at the proprietor, “Big brother Xu Shen,” he spoke to the older man next to him, “this is the best restaurant our Ventia City has to offer! Let us live it up here with good wine and fine food, and then I'll take you to the enjoy the Aroma Flowerbeds, I'm sure you'll enjoy it!”

The other man nodded, “Thank you for your troubles, young master Xing.”

“It’s no trouble at all! Brother Xu Shen, you are a guest of our Xing, of course we’ll treat you well.” Xing Luo smiled ‘generously’. When the proprietor didn’t move from his spot, Xing Luo gave him a glare, “Why are you still standing there?! Hurry up and move!”

“That....” Clearly on the verge of tears, the proprietor choked over his words, sneaking a glance over to where Bai Yunfei was.

“Eh?”

It was then Xing Luo noticed the strange atmosphere on the second floor of the restaurant. Seeing barely anyone here, Xing Luo looked to Bai Yunfei, and then to the two young women not too far away.

“Haha!! So there were two beautiful young women dining here! We’ve it lucky today.” Swaggering towards the two young woman as if he owned the place, Xing Luo spoke as courteously as he could to them, “My dear ladies, please stay a while and keep us company!”

“As for you....” His eyes darted over to Bai Yunfei, “you can get lost!”

Neither of the two women had been paying attention to Xing Luo until he came up to them. An angry tick appeared on Nangong Yuexia’s face, but Yu Li completely ignored Xing Luo to feed a piece of food to Nangong Yuexia.

Like Yu Li, Bai Yunfei continued eating his meal without looking like he even heard him. Xiao Lan did however, give Xing Luo a strange look of disdain before tossing a chicken drumstick into its mouth.

“.....”

Their lackluster responses bewildered Xing Luo. His family had been the strongest one in the Northern Ridge Province, and Ventia City had virtually been his own personal playground for twenty years. Not ever had he been stonewalled like this before.

The relative desolation of Ventia City meant that very few soul cultivators would venture here. Soul Exalts were very rare beings, so even a third-rate family like the Xing was able to enjoy a brief moment of time of being called the ‘strongest’.

“What a rude man you are. Where do you get off, interrupting the meal of another? Hurry up and leave already, I can’t even eat with you standing here....” Nangong Yuexia glared balefully at Xing Luo, whose face went pale at the response.

The proprietor blanked in the face as well. He was concerned that these two unknowing women would know be in for it, but he himself was too afraid to say anything. All he could do was stare pointedly at Yu Li and hope that she would annoy Xing Luo no further.

But Yu Li didn’t do anything. She looked from the proprietor to the men standing behind Xing Luo. Her cherry red lips pursed together, “My junior and I will not trouble you with our company, we shall take our leave after our meal.”

“Ah? Hehe....” Xing Luo gave an ominous sneer at the ‘naive’ woman in front of him. Disregarding Bai Yunfei for the meanwhile, he sneered at Yu Li, “Hehe....how daring of you to refuse our company. You must not be from this city? As long as I give the word, you two should give up trying to leave here. If you don’t attend to us, then don’t even bother leaving this city!”

The auras of the two women were unviewable due to his being only an early-stage Soul Ancestor, so he mistook them for being only ordinary women.

“Young master Xing....” Noticing something was off, Xu Shen started to speak, albeit hesitantly.

“Don’t you worry, brother Xu Shen! These two beautiful ladies will be ours today!” Xing Luo misunderstood his warning, “In Ventia City, the house of Liu’s word is law! No one would dare speak out against us on behalf of a mere two women!”

Xing Luo was drunk with power, and even Xu Shen was finding the sight to be something to frown upon, or even scorn. “What kind of family would have such a brainless ‘young master’ like this? He takes himself to be the emperor of the world! Who knows just how many deaths he’d die of if placed in the outside world, let alone a small isolated place of nowhere like this city.”

If not for the fact that he was being chased by other people, Xu Shen would never have come over to this place and rely on such a puny household like this....

Since these two women were being ‘insensitive’, then Xing Luo wouldn’t beat around the bush either. Lasciviously, his eyes hovered over the bosom of Nangong Yuexia, a smirk still present on his face. “Here in Ventia City, there is no women I cannot get!”

A hand rose up to come stroke her face as he spoke, “Hehe....” the smirk on his face grew even more obscene, “Are you a virgin, my lady? Follow me, and I will teach you the pleasures of a wo—”

“Bang!”

“Young master, watch out!”

“Young master!”

There was the sound of wood hitting flesh before Xu Shen and the other servants cried out in a late warning.

It was a furious Yu Li that moved into action first. Before Xing Luo could finish his sentence, the chopsticks in her hand flew forward to slap against Xing Luo’s head. With him being only an early-stage Soul Ancestor, he hadn’t the reaction time to defend himself.

There was the clattering sound of chinaware being broken as he stumbled away from the table, some blood dripping from his wound!

Another two bowls flew at him while he was dazed. Before they could hit Xing Luo, Xu Shen stepped forward, a golden energy

blazing out from the late-stage Soul Ancestor to shatter the two bowls.

But before he could take another step, Xu Shen was surprised to see a red line of light streak underneath his arm and then wrap around Xing Luo's neck like a snake!

It was a strip of red silk!

And the other end of the silk was held in the hand of the woman named Nangong Yuexia!

She looked angry as she held onto the strip of silk, though a bit of excitement was also visible in her eyes.

Under the bewildered eyes of Xu Shen, Nangong Yuexia tightened the muscles in her arm, pulling Xing Luo towards him!

Pursing her red lips, Nangong Yuexia tightened her pinkish fist and slammed it unceremoniously onto Xing Luo's eye!

Chapter 487: Self-seeking Trouble (Third)

None of the people there thought that such a dainty, innocent-looking, young woman would be able to bring down the early-stage Soul Ancestor Xing Luo without a problem!

She pulled the red silk back towards her, simultaneously pulling Xing Luo towards her other fist. Holding back a little bit, she planted a punch right on top of his left eye.

Even with his soulforce moving to protect him, the punch of the blow left stars in Xing Luo's vision. Everything was spinning in his head, and his vision was already starting to fade.

He would be sporting a big bruise around his left eye for a good while.

Everyone, including Xu Shen, was shocked to see Xing Luo injured and quickly moved forward to save him.

Xu Shen paused just half a step later; his eyes widening as he realized Yu Li had at some point stood up and was now in front of him!

Yu Li raised her hand and slapped it gently onto Xu Shen's left shoulder. There was a cracking sound from within his body before he was sent flying backwards as if struck by something enormous! Sailing through the air, he crashed into the four servants behind him, sending them all tumbling.

Right besides Yu Li, Nangong Yuexia pulled the red silk in her hand again, pulling the still airborne Xing Luo back towards her....

“Here comes another!”

She laughed coyly. Raising her fist again, she landed yet another square blow onto Xing Luo's face.

This time, it was his right eye.

Back on planet Earth, they would call this as having ‘panda

eyes'

“Pea—peak late-stage Soul Ancestor!!”

Xu Shen cried out, his face pale with pain and realization at what Nangong Yuexia was, his right hand holding onto his left shoulder.

It was only a moment, but he saw it! This young woman in front of him was a peak late-stage Soul Ancestor! That was stronger than him! And....as for Yu Li, Xu Shen still couldn't see her strength, but that meant she was even stronger than the other!

Xu Shen started to tremble. By trying to help out the moronic Xing Luo, he had kicked the hornet's nest and incurred the wrath of someone stronger than him....

In the soul cultivator world, people who were foolish enough to act like Xing Luo could expect to be killed at the very least, and Xu Shen didn't take the two beautiful women in front of him as being very generous....

But contrary to his expectations, the two women seemed to be as kind as they were beautiful and attacked Xing Luo no longer.

Xu Shen sighed in relief at that.

Casting a cold glance onto the people in front of her, Yu Li sighed, “Yuexia, let's leave now. There's no need to mind these people.”

“Oh....”

Her companion replied a little reluctantly, she had still wanted to leave another bruise on Xing Luo's nose....

She tugged her right hand, detaching the red silk around Xing Luo's neck to pull back into her robes. Together with Yu Li, the two of them walked towards the stairs and out of the restaurant, but not without Nangong Yuexia giving Bai Yunfei a curious stare.

From start to finish, he had been eating his meal without looking up once at what was going on around him.

It was with great panic that the proprietor struggled with the gold coin tossed to him by Yu Li as they walked out. Taking it into the store purse, he stared back at the unsteady Xing Luo with a sweaty forehead and vexed expression.

His soulforce healing his wounds, Xu Shen stood up, “Help the young master up.”

A servant hurried forward to help the dizzy Xing Luo to a nearby stool.

Slightly out of it, Xing Luo said nothing for a while. Then when he finally regained the ability of speech, he roared, “Hahaha!! How dare they hit me! How dare they!! Those sl*ts! Capture them! Capture them at once! I want them to die painfully and with regret!!”

He didn’t look at all like a Soul Ancestor now. Instead, he was acting like a self-entitled second generational.

Xu Shen tried to dissuade him, “Young master, please calm down. I’ve a feeling that those two people aren’t ordinary. You should avoid them for now.”

“Not ordinary?! What mean you by ‘unordinary’?! In Ventia City, we Xing are the strongest!” Xing Luo started to rant, “Call my brother here! Call Wu Ming! And invite second uncle if possible! Invite Zi Mei too!! Those who anger the Xing won’t leave Ventia City in one piece!”

Tempted to give Xing Luo a hearty slap across the face, Xu Shen opted to frown instead.

“Are you the crown prince? Your family wasted so many primal stones and medicines to have you become a Soul Ancestor, and I have to say, it’s wasted on you! Having a person like you as a son will only invite calamity onto your household.”

“Hah.....”

A chuckle escaped from Bai Yunfei’s mouth. Since it had been so

quiet then, everyone heard who it came from.

It had been Bai Yunfei who laughed.

He couldn't help it. Such an idiotic young master like this one was hard to come by, and Bai Yunfei couldn't help but snort.

His chuckle only served to anger Xing Luo even more. Eyes burning with fury, he glared at Bai Yunfei, "Brat!! You dare laugh?! You outsiders fail to understand the power I have! Your encounter with me is an unlucky one for you! Men! I want you t—"

Bai Yunfei's head suddenly looked up, his one-eyed glare stopping Xing Luo dead in his tracks.

It had only been for a moment, but it was enough. Drinking the last of his soup, Bai Yunfei placed a golden coin onto the table and stood up. He patted the wyrm on the back with a smile, "Alright, let's get going."

And just like that, Bai Yunfei left the restaurant as well.

When Bai Yunfei, Xiao Qi, and Xiao Lan disappeared from the restaurant, Xu Shen started to think to himself. From what he say, Bai Yunfei was only an early-stage Soul Ancestor, and the wyrm an early-stage class five soulbeast.

He thought that Xing Luo would've decided to rain fury onto the unlucky soul cultivator, but he calmed down surprisingly quick. Since he did nothing, Xu Shen decided to follow suit.

Since he was only a late-stage Soul Ancestor, he wasn't able to see how strong Xiao Qi was. The only thing he knew was that the wyrm was a lot smarter than it looked. When Bai Yunfei had warned the wyrm to suppress its aura, it was able to do so to the levels of an early-stage class five, and Bai Yunfei had followed suit. That was why he appeared to be an early-stage Soul Ancestor.

If he completely suppressed his soulforce, it'd be extremely weird to see a commoner walking with an early-stage class five soulbeast right next to him. Anyone would be able to see that he was

pretending.

But that was the extent of what Xu Shen could see from Bai Yunfei.

The reason why Yu Li was able to see through the wyrm's real strength was because she was a mid-stage Soul Exalt! Her ability in hiding her aura was a lot better than Nangong Yuexia, so she looked weaker than Nangong Yuexia despite actually being stronger. Xu Shen hadn't seen through her strength since he was weaker, but he had his doubts.

There was a reason why Xing Luo had stopped talking earlier. His face had a hint of fear on it, and a little bit of excitement.

Actually, there was two more reasons. Bai Yunfei's sharp glare had shut up him. And the other reason was that he recognized him.

Bai Yunfei hadn't bothered to hide his appearance when he walked into Ventia City. He wasn't a fugitive, so he saw no reason on needing to hide his face.

"It's....it's him!! What's he doing here?! Haha!! He's here of all places!"

Doubt, then excitement flooded Xing Luo's mind. He never imagined that Bai Yunfei would appear here of all places.

He hadn't forgotten about Bai Yunfei ever since they first met, and never did he forget about the humiliation he suffered at his hands....

His head flickered up, hatred and venom practically flowing from his eyes. "Hurry up and have Wu Ming come over!" He ordered to a servant.

The servant left, leaving Xing Luo to stare down from the window with an ominous leer, "There's no doors to hell, but you still came knocking. Even if you're from the Crafting School, you'll die here in my city!"

“The humiliation you gave me those years ago, I’ll pay it back to you today!”

Chapter 488: Seeking Trouble (Fourth)

“The house of Xing from Ventia City....why does it sound familiar?”

It was a question that bothered Bai Yunfei as he left the restaurant, but he couldn't put his finger on it and decided to forget about it.

Five years ago when he had only just joined the Crafting School, he, Tang Xinyun, Huangfu Rui, and the others went to Redfire City to enjoy the lantern festival. There had been an altercation with someone from the house of Xing in Ventia City, and that person was Xing Luo!!

Something minor like this wasn't something Bai Yunfei wanted to dwell upon, so he forgot about it. Even if a soul cultivator's memory was longer than most people, it was hard to remember every little thing.

Xing Luo on the other hand, held grudges for a very long time. The humiliation he was dealt by the hands of Bai Yunfei back in the lantern festival earned Bai Yunfei a lifelong grudge. Though it had been the red magiboar that injured him, he placed the blame solely on Bai Yunfei since he was here. And now that they were both in Ventia City, Xing Luo was more than ready to take out his anger and grudges on him.

To Bai Yunfei, what happened in the restaurant was only just a small matter, and nothing he should care about. Now that he was back onto the streets, it was time for him to start shopping.

Ventia City wasn't huge, but it had everything. Every area had their own interesting wares, and Bai Yunfei found himself buying up things that he had either run out of in his space ring, or needed to get more of.

Time hit four o'clock before long, and Bai Yunfei found himself

buying up several spices and seasonings from a spice shop. Walking out from the store, he caught something out from the corner of his eye, but he continued walking on the road.

Crossing another two roads, Bai Yunfei narrowed his eyes. Changing in direction, he walked down a road going perpendicular to before.

He didn't enter any stores. Instead, he walked down the road where less and less people traveled....

It wouldn't be for another twenty minutes when he finally came to a stop. Where he stood now was one of the more isolated corners in the western quadrant of Ventia City. Shabby huts and garbage dumps were everywhere here and had long since been abandoned by its inhabitants. Only the occasional stray dog, cat, or mouse would appear here. No other person would dare come to such a dump.

He came to a stop. Without turning back, Bai Yunfei spoke, "Alright, come on out. What business do you have with me?"

His voice carried far despite not talking so loudly. But it was loud enough for several dogs to hear and run off in fright.

"Hehe....you knew you were followed, and yet you still came to a place like this? You've balls. Do you have confidence in your strength? Do you think you can deal with whatever troubles? Know your place...."

An ominous voice spoke from behind Bai Yunfei. There was the sound of rustling, and then three figures came out from behind a hut.

Walking at the front of the three was Xing Luo. On his right was Xu Shen, and by his left was a bald-headed man with a dark expression on his face.

Pleased with himself, Xing Luo spoke to Bai Yunfei, "Hehe. Kid, never thought a day like this would come, have you? Now that

you're in my territory, you should prepare yourself for my revenge. The humiliation I suffered all those years ago will be returned many times over to you!"

Bai Yunfei wasn't too surprised at their actions, though Xing Luo's words confused him to some degree. "Who are you? Do I know you? We don't have any grudges between us, so what are you doing seeking me out for? Is it because of what happened in the restaurant? You should be going after those two women then and not me...."

"Er...."

"Don't act stupid!" Xing Luo spat impatiently, "do you think you could bluff your way out of this?! I never forgot about what happened to me back in Redfire City!"

"Redfire City?" Bai Yunfei repeated. "Sorry, but I really don't remember."

"....."

What is the most depressing thing in the world?

Xing Luo had the answer:

Doing all this preparation in order to take it out on your most hated enemy so that they'd piss themselves in fear and such, only to have this said enemy not remember you.

What a mood killer.

"You...you...." Xing Luo's body shook angrily, "Back then in Redfire City! You were with that group! That idiot of a brat! And that damnable red magiboar! The one that made me unable to move for months! I've never forgotten your face before! I'm going to flay your skin to my hearts content today!"

Bai Yunfei tried his hardest to remember.

"Oh...I think I've got it," he suddenly spoke up, "I remember something like that. You must've been that reckless second

generational.....right? It's been five years, how'd you become an early-stage Soul Ancestor?"

"You!!"

Bai Yunfei's casual demeanor towards him sent Xing Luo into a fury. "Wu Ming!" He spoke to the person to his left, "Capture him! Cripple him, but don't kill him! I want to be the one he begs to before he dies!!"

An angry light flashed across the eyes of the one named Wu Ming at this order. But when he thought about being rewarded by the useless young master, he laughed. Stepping towards Bai Yunfei, he prepared himself to cripple Bai Yunfei.

Wu Ming was once one of the Northern Ridge Province's most infamous evildoers who killed many people. He didn't go by his current name at first, but then when he decided to change his name to escape persecution, he thought having Wu Ming, or 'No life', would match what he did to others.

He was one of the strongest in the area as a mid-stage Soul Exalt—a rare being in this province.

He had to admit he was a little confused about the situation though. The person in front of him was merely an early-stage Soul Ancestor. Xu Shen would've have been enough to deal him, so why was he brought here?

Xing Luo had actually put a little thought into this. He knew Bai Yunfei was from the Crafting School, and crafters were always known to be hard to deal with. He was also afraid that Xu Shen wouldn't be enough to deal with the soulbeast next to him, so he called Wu Ming over. With Wu Ming, there'd be a great enough difference in power to deal with Bai Yunfei, no matter how many soul armaments he had.

Of course, he didn't tell anyone else that Bai Yunfei was a crafter. Bai Yunfei was by himself here. If he killed him and got rid of the

evidence, no one would know, and no one would tell.

Wu Ming's eyes hovered over the blue-eyes wyrm next to Bai Yunfei. His eyes weren't as strong as Yu Li and was thus unable to tell exactly just how strong the wyrm was, even though he was a mid-stage Soul Exalt.

“Rrrrrr.....”

The blue-eyes wyrm let loose a low grumble as if it was yawning. It looked over to Bai Yunfei with an expression of boredom.

The people in front of it were nothing more than ants, and so the wyrm was confused why Bai Yunfei was wasting so much time chatting with them.

Bai Yunfei shrugged and pointed a finger to Xing Luo, “I don't want to cause any trouble, but since you're looking for it and even insulted my junior....prepare yourself to be bedridden for another half year.”

His ‘impudence’ astounded Xing Luo even more. “Even in your f*cking death you're so arrogant! Did I stutter or something?! That sl*t was a fool! A sl*t! And your mom was a sl*t!”

The complete disregard Bai Yunfei was showing him had brought him to a cursing frenzy. Without a filter, Xing Luo cursed Bai Yunfei out one after another.

“Bang!!”

In the middle of one of his curses, a stream of fire shot forth from Bai Yunfei and surrounded a good hundred meters around them all.

There was a fire that burned just as hot in Bai Yunfei's eyes now. Staring at the frightened Xing Luo, Bai Yunfei's next words were spoken with a bone-chilling frost.

“Now you've done it!!”

Chapter 489: What did....You Say?!

Bai Yunfei's mother was one of his few sore points, as he allowed no one to disrespect her. Even if it was a mistake, he wouldn't forgive it!!

And so when Xing Luo made the matters even worse by cursing her out, Bai Yunfei flew into a rage instantly!

With how strong Bai Yunfei was today, he could limit his strength normally, but why would he 'limit' his strength for his? He was angry! He had the right to be angry, and the right to use whatever power he wanted!

He wasn't planning on killing Xing Luo and the others at first. They might not have had the best intentions in mind with them wanting to teach Bai Yunfei a lesson, but now....since they already said they were after Bai Yunfei's life, then he'd be sure to let them know the feeling!

The explosion of power from Bai Yunfei revealed his strength as a mid-stage Soul Exalt to them. The temperature in the area shot up drastically with the raging fire around them, a spark of purple occasionally flying out from the fire.

“Chirp!!”

Thanks to the connection between the two, Xiao Qi was able to tell why Bai Yunfei was angry, and subsequently grew angry itself. Transforming to the size of a large eagle, it activated the Wind and Lightning Feathers and cloaked itself in its violet and azure light to look like a spirit bird of some kind.

“Roar!!”

Not really understanding what was going on, the blue-eyes wyrm roared as well and rapidly grew in size along with Xiao Qi. Excited that it could go loose for once, it bathed itself in blue light to grow back to its normally large size to stand behind Bai Yunfei and stare

at the ants in front of it.

Now that the three of them revealed their true strength, the other three men were petrified with fear.

Wu Ming had been just twenty steps away from Bai Yunfei before their transformation. His body was washed with orange light to form a draconic claw over his right hand. But now, his eyes were wide open with fear as he stood as still as a statue.

Xing Luo and Xu Shen were both standing equally still, their spirits taking temporary leave from their bodies.

It had only been for a quick moment, however. The wyrm's roar had been the sound that broke the spell, and Wu Ming had been the first to respond. With a high-pitched scream, he turned tail and fled!

But Bai Yunfei's actions were even faster than his!

Wu Ming had only taken a small step in retreat when Bai Yunfei disappeared away from sight in a blur of purple light!

And by the point inertia brought him to his second step, Wu Ming was met with Bai Yunfei appearing right in front of him!

The Flash Step!

Wu Ming couldn't even describe the terror he was feeling right now. He didn't even see Bai Yunfei move!! They were both mid-stage Soul Exalts, but the equipment Bai Yunfei had granted him far more speed than many thought possible!

Wu Ming's first instinct was to bring up his right hand in defense when Bai Yunfei appeared out of nowhere. Bolstered by his fear and adrenaline, Wu Ming stabbed his 'dragon's claw' straight forward to attack Bai Yunfei.

“Bang!!”

His claw could shatter stone and warp metal with his strength, but Bai Yunfei wasn't afraid to unleash an Eighty-one Fold Fist

Force against it!

The elemental earth crumbled away upon contact, Bai Yunfei's punch breaking the bones in Wu Ming's hand. Not even another moment later, Wu Ming's entire right arm was completely pulverized with bone fragments sticking out!! Completely defeated, Wu Ming was thrown away from Bai Yunfei, his body flying even farther when Bai Yunfei kicked him. Blood was spat from his mouth as he flew, but before he could even land, a tail suddenly wrapped around his body!

“Bang!” Flinging him in a completely opposite direction, the blue-eyes wyrm sent the man flying through two huts before coming to a stop in the wall of the third.

Bai Yunfei didn't even spare a glance at the hindrance. Disappearing again in another flash of light, he came to a stop in front of Xing Luo.

It took only three seconds for Wu Ming to be dealt with.

Xu Shen hadn't even been able to form a response during the time Wu Ming was being dealt with. By the time the idea occurred to him to flee, Bai Yunfei was already there in front of him to slap him away as he would slap a housefly.

Eyes filled with utter terror, Xu Shen's body dragged violently across the ground. Each time he slammed against the ground, another mouthful of blood was lost. But before he could even pick himself up, a tornado about ten meters in circumference formed around him. The tornado surrounded him, completely preventing him from moving unless he wanted to be hurt.

In less than a few seconds, Bai Yunfei was already in front of Xing Luo without anyone to protect him....

Of course, Xing Luo by now realized just what was going on. His knees gave out beneath him, causing him to fall to the ground with a plop to stare up at Bai Yunfei as though he was a ghost.

“What did you....say?”

Bai Yunfei asked, his eyes still staring icily at him.

“I....I....” Xing Luo stammered, no other word managing to form in his mouth.

“Bang!!”

He hadn’t answered fast enough. Bai Yunfei lashed out with a kick across Xing Luo’s chest and sent him flying. He didn’t put all his might behind it, but it was enough to force some blood out from Xing Luo’s mouth.

“What did you just say?!”

Bai Yunfei advanced two steps forward, asking the same question from before with even more emphasis.

“I....don’t...don’t you kill me! I’m...I’m the second son of the Xing! The house of Xing is the strongest family in the Northern Ridge Province! We have a Soul King as our ancestor! You can’t kill me, you can’t! Don’t kill....me....” He was completely cowed by now. The murderous intent in Bai Yunfei’s eyes shook him to his very core and practically brought him to hysteria.

Fear had completely overtaken Xing Luo’s mind now. He was starting to plead with Bai Yunfei.

“Ah!!!!”

An agonizing scream from behind Bai Yunfei brought everything to a grinding halt.

Bewildered, Bai Yunfei turned around, only to see the blue-eyes wyrm’s right foot emerge from a pile of rubbish.

Wu Ming’s aura disappeared after that.

He had been stomped to death by the blue-eyes wyrm!

The blue-eyes wyrm wasn’t a benevolent master. Xiao Qi held Xu Shen in contention so that Bai Yunfei could deal with him, but the

blue-eyes wyrm didn't care at all for them. Since they had annoyed Bai Yunfei, they would die. Simple as that.

Bai Yunfei was surprised, he hadn't expected the wyrm to kill the man just like that.

While Bai Yunfei was preoccupied, Xing Luo saw his chance. In his last moment desperation, he summoned as much as his soulforce as he could and brought out a purple dagger from his ring.

Fear-driven, he threw the dagger as hard as he could at Bai Yunfei!

“Die!!!”

Chapter 490: Poison!!

The danger Xing Luo was in was overwhelming his mind. All the pressure he was feeling had inhibited his thinking capabilities, and because of that pressure, he didn't think about the potential consequences when he attacked.

It was the only thing he could do. Because if he didn't do anything else, he would die....

Unfortunately for him, going down this path was only a futile attempt to prolong the inevitable....

An attempt to kill Bai Yunfei with what mediocre strength he had was a fool's dream, even with how close he was.

Though Bai Yunfei was looking at the blue-eyes wyrm, the moment Xing Luo twitched, Bai Yunfei was already moving reflexively with his right arm coming up!

“Clang!”

The dagger stabbed into Bai Yunfei's Ardent Sun Glove, but not through it. Now completely harmless, the dagger was taken into Bai Yunfei's hand and thrown back at its owner!

“Ah!”

Xing Luo's realization where the dagger was going to came a little too late. Bai Yunfei had deflected the dagger so that it'd cut into his left shoulder as it flew away!

The cut wasn't big at all; just large enough to draw blood. To a soul cultivator, a wound like this could easily be staunched and healed.

But Xing Luo's reaction gave Bai Yunfei some alarm.

He had screamed, staring at the wound on his left shoulder in absolute terror. For such a tiny little wound, his face had the look of despair on it!

Despair not from his imminent death by Bai Yunfei, but from the tiny cut mark!

“Ah! Ahhh!!!” He screamed again, his voice reaching a hysterical fervor. Clutching at his left shoulder with his right arm, he tore away the chunk of flesh where the cut mark was!

“I don’t want to die! I don’t want to dieeee!! Save me!! Save meee!!” Even after tearing away a part of his shoulder, Xing Luo was still howling furiously in tears. “Xu Shen, save me! Save me, father! I don’t want to dieeee!!!”

“Ahhh!!!”

Bai Yunfei didn’t know what to think. Xing Luo’s reaction scared him fiercely, and he didn’t understand what was going on. He looked to the left shoulder of Xing Luo and focused in on it, realizing something.

“Is this....poison?!”

Xing Luo tore out enough of his flesh to reveal the pale-white humerus. Aside from the blood and flesh around the afflicted area, Bai Yunfei saw a hint of something else! Some parts of the blood was a darkly purple, and the strong scent of decay was already starting to mature....

Poison!

The dagger Xing Luo tried on Bai Yunfei had contained poisoned on its blade!

And what a fearsome poison this was, if even an early-stage Soul Ancestor wasn’t able to stop it!

A sliver of fear shot up Bai Yunfei’s spine. If that dagger had hit him, how would he fare with it?

“I don’t....want to die....sa-save me....”

Xing Luo’s face grew progressively darker with the same color of the poison, his face twisted in on itself with pain as the poison in

him disseminated through his body and to his organs. He looked quite terrible.

The poison must've affected his vocal chords as well, as he was no longer screaming when he pleaded for Bai Yunfei to save him.

“.....”

But Bai Yunfei refused. He had no pity for a man who just tried to kill him. And with Xing Luo being killed by his own sinister weapon, that worked just fine for Bai Yunfei. It'd save him the trouble of doing the deed himself.

“Sa-save...”

Xing Luo's words were barely coherent now. His eyes were dimming, and his face was now entirely a dark purple. He laid on the ground, his body twitching as blood dripped from the several orifices on his face.

Five minutes later, Xing Luo finally succumbed to the poison!

Bai Yunfei hadn't moved from his spot as Xing Luo wasted away under him. When Xing Luo breathed his last, Bai Yunfei snorted. He casted a fireball onto the corpse, burning it away so that only ashes remained.

With another wave, he collected the nearby dagger and Xing Luo's space ring for future purposes.

Bai Yunfei turned around to walk towards the wind prison a few steps away.

Xiao Qi chirped once in salute to Bai Yunfei before dispelling the tornado and revealing a very frightened Xu Shen inside of it.

Having been rendered a prisoner in this tornado, Xu Shen had been forced to use his soulsense in order to watch what was happening on the outside. He felt it all; Wu Ming dying to the blue-eyes wyrm, and then Xing Luo's slow and agonizing death to his own poisoned weapon!

Xu Shen trembled as Bai Yunfei made his way towards him. Him being a late-stage Soul Ancestor meant nothing in this one moment as he laid paralyzed with terror on the ground.

Three men came forward to kill Bai Yunfei, and two of them were dead already. It still remained to be seen if he'd be a survivor, though the chances of that wasn't looking good....

Bai Yunfei eyed Xu Shen, a hint of murderous intent in them.

A lenient hand was taboo when resolving a matter of grudges between soul cultivators. Bai Yunfei was no evildoer, but if someone was coming after his life, he wouldn't hesitate to kill.

“Do—don't kill me!!”

That had been Xu Shen's first response when he saw the look in Bai Yunfei's eyes. “Don't kill me! I....I was only following orders! Xing Luo was the one behind this! He's dead now, and he got what he deserved, I'm innocent in this! Please sire, spare my life! I...I won't say anything! I'll leave this city—no, I'll leave this province! I'll go far far away where no one will know who I am! Sire, please grant me mercy, spare the life of this lowly mongrel!”

Pride, determination, and intrepid. Not every person had each of these three qualities, and in the face of death, many would often throw away these qualities and give up their self-dignity in order to beg for their lives.

“Will you really not tell anyone? Will you leave this place, and never mention my name?” To Xu Shen's immediate surprise—and relief—Bai Yunfei spoke what seemed to be the words of compromise to him.

Unbeknownst to Xu Shen though, the crystalline bracelet on Bai Yunfei's right hand flashed once with light as he spoke....

Xu Shen's eyes lit up. The ray of hope had shined down on him at last! He bowed his head at once, “Yes! I will! I won't say your name ever! I never even saw you before, sire! Please spare my life!”

In his abject terror and seemingly-earnest words, the man didn't look like he was lying.

Bai Yunfei studied the man for a few seconds, his lips eventually creeping into a cold smile. "I don't like liars...."

The blood drained away from Xu Shen's face. Whatever begging words he was going to say next dried up in his mouth as he looked up, eyes flashing with maddened desperation!

"Bang!!"

Yellow light exploded from his both, forming into a shining sword of elemental metal to try and stab into Bai Yunfei's body. Pushing against the ground from his kowtow position, the man flew to his feet and began to run away with all his might!

The beckoning fear of death seized his mind. He didn't want to wait for it without a fight; if there was no chance to flee, he'd go down fighting to his very last breath at the very least!

The instantaneous velocity of a late-stage Soul Ancestor was fast enough to bring him a good two hundred meters away in one fluid moment. This brought him near the edge of this abandoned part of the city, and it didn't seem like Bai Yunfei was chasing after him!

Hope started to fill Xu Shen again, if he could keep this up, he'd be able to escape!

But then as if like the envoy of death himself, a chirp from right behind his head dashed away his hopes. Turning around, he saw a black crescent-shape blade come down upon him....

Chapter 491: Yue Feng

Ten minutes later, Bai Yunfei walked out from the slums back onto the main streets with Xiao Qi and Xiao Lan.

Bai Yunfei knew better than to stick around in the same area after killing those three men. There'd definitely be people that knew where and why Xing Luo went, like those four servants back in the restaurant. The Xing had plenty of influence in Ventia City, and it wouldn't take long for them to notice Xing Luo's disappearance and come looking.

Bai Yunfei wasn't particularly afraid, but he didn't want to stick around for trouble either.

“Ugh! I just wanted to have a nice rest tonight, guess we're leaving this city now....”

He sighed as he made his way over to the southern gates out of Ventia City.

.....

A group of people came out from their hidden corner when Bai Yunfei left for the gates. These people were soul cultivators.

There weren't many in the city, but Soul Exalts could still be found here.

They had caught onto the influx of soulforce from Bai Yunfei's fight earlier. It hadn't lasted long, but the fight still took long enough for the Soul Exalts come rushing over shortly after Bai Yunfei left.

Several of the soul cultivators weren't able to see any clues, but there were a few that watched the battle from afar.

These examples of said spectators could be seen a good two kilometer away, sipping tea from their balcony three stories high.

It was the same two beautiful woman from the restaurant earlier,

Yu Li and Nangong Yuexia.

“He’s dead....that annoyance is actually dead!!” Nangong Yuexia cried in surprise. “And a mid-stage Soul Exalt! Was it....was it that strange brother from earlier that killed the annoyance? Wasn’t he an early-stage Soul Ancestor? How’d he get so strong so quickly?”

Like Nangong Yuexia, Yu Li was watching with amazement, though she smiled at her companion’s words. “That person’s strength wasn’t an early-stage Soul Ancestor at all! I couldn’t see his strength, but I could for his soulbeast, so they must be the same strength. I just never thought that even the little bird would be a class six soulbeast.”

She was a little confused by that revelation. “How strange....you can only contract one soulbeast, so is the other one a pet soulbeast?! Even one of the Ten Schools and Five Nobles would find it hard to make a pet out of a class six soulbeast....”

“Hehe....I wonder what monster of a person took on such a genius like that? He’s a brave one to kill the young master and guest of the Xing without hesitation.”

A voice spoke out from the roof above the two women’s heads before tumbling down and over it to stand on the balcony banister.

It was a twenty-seven or twenty-eight year old man. He wore green robes, had long hair that reached his shoulders, sharp eyes and tall nose that made him quite handsome.

The two women were surprised to see him, but Nangong Yuexia looked happy. “Brother Yue Feng! It’s you!!”

“Haha, sister Yuexia,” the man smiled, “you’ve gotten a lot prettier since I last saw you.”

She ran up to the man, looking around expectantly, “Where’s Xiao Xiong? Is Xiao Xiong with you?”

“Ah....” The smile on Yue Feng’s face faltered as mention of his old soulbeast came to mind.....

Then, a small furry claw came up from behind his head to grab onto it.

A mini-sized bear came popping up from his back.

“Yah! Xiao Xiong is here!” Nangong Yuexia cried out excitedly, hugging the little bear to her chest to affectionately scratch its head. “Long time no see, Xiao Xiong! You’re looking cuter than before!”

“.....”

Watching as Nangong Yuexia played around with the little bear of his, Yue Feng smile twitched, “Ah, my poor friend, have fun playing with her....”

He walked up to Yu Li next, “Long time no see, Yu Li.”

“Yue Feng, you’ve become a late-stage Soul Exalt, I see.” She remarked, an odd expression on her face.

“Haha, it was because of that soul contract. You don’t have a contracted soulbeast yet, Yu Li, but when you do, I’m sure you’ll become a late-stage Soul Exalt too.” He laughed, “Are you planning to enter the Soulbeast Forest this time?”

Yu Li nodded. “Indeed, Master said that I should try and find Yuexia a soulbeast a little sooner, so I decided to look for one myself.”

“I see. Everyone finds their contracted soulbeast a little differently. Sister Yuexia is a talented one, the moment she finds a soulbeast to contract with, she’ll become a Soul Exalt no problem. And with her talent after that, it won’t take long for her to take the world by storm as an up-and-coming prodigy.”

“Hm....that won’t be for many years from now.” Yu Li laughed, watching as Yuexia played with the little bear. “She’s been training hard since she was young. I wanted her to come see the outside world for once.

“What brings you to the small city of Ventia?” She changed the subject.

“I...well.” Yue Feng’s eyes grew frosty, “I’m here to find someone.”

Looking to where Yu Li had been looking at earlier, he said, “That reminds me, the person that died over there....was that the second son from the Xing, Xing Luo?”

“Hm?” Perking an eyebrow, Yu Li turned back to look at her friend. She hadn’t mentioned any names earlier when she was talking with Yuexia, but it seemed that Yue Feng knew already.

So how was it that he knew who Xing Luo was? Had he been paying attention to him?

“It was.” She replied, nonetheless. “Xing Luo angered someone he shouldn’t have, and now him and two other guests were killed by the person he angered.”

Yue Feng’s eyes lit up. Turning to the south, he looked like he was thinking about something, something that excited him, but whatever it was, no one knew.

“Yu Li,” he spoke, “I apologize, but I’ve something to take care of.”

He turned to Nangong Yuexia next to take the little bear away from her, “Sister Yuexia, I have to go now, see you next time!”

He leapt away from the balcony into the skies. Stepping off again, he leapt to another rooftop. From there, he jumped again and again to travel away from the two women in a hurry.

“Aww.....why’s he leaving so soon?” Yuexia grumbled discontentedly, “I didn’t even get the chance to talk to him before he left, hmph....”

Yu Li was confused as well. Watching as Yue Feng traveled farther and farther away, she began to think.

“The direction he’s traveling.....is his target him??”

Chapter 492: Coming to Kill

At the southern gates of Ventia City.

Bai Yunfei was taking Xiao Lan and Xiao Qi out from the city and away onto the official roads.

After killing Xing Luo and the other two, Bai Yunfei had no desire to stay there.

He was as calm as he could be. He wasn't running away for his life, but he didn't want to stick around either, hence why he was just 'running'.

Now that it was five in the afternoon, the streets were primarily empty of people. Walking quickly with purpose, Bai Yunfei ensured that he was walking faster than the others, and in time, he was well out of Ventia City and far away enough to have the city be only a blur now.

Several kilometers away, Bai Yunfei was now by a wide river where the only way across was a stone bridge. As he was about to step on it, Bai Yunfei found himself looking backwards.

"They're finally here? Looks like trouble's here then...."

He sighed, but he knew that the house of Xing wouldn't dawdle on a matter like this, and the only thing that helped him in this matter was him leaving the city sooner rather than later. If the Xing hadn't found enough evidence, they wouldn't have caught up to Bai Yunfei so quickly, but since they were here already, that meant the obvious had happened and a fight was in bound.

Fleeing wasn't an option for him. If they wanted to take revenge for Xing Luo, then so be it.

Already seeing several people of the Soul Exalt coming out from Ventia City, Bai Yunfei looked around himself, and then to his companions to start traveling across the river.

He wasn't running, he was just stepping away from the main roads and the bridge. A battle would definitely destroy the bridge, and that'd impact the lives of the commoners that lived here. If he could help it, Bai Yunfei wanted to avoid causing too much environmental damage.

The people chasing him from behind sped up when they saw Bai Yunfei move. Clearly, they thought Bai Yunfei was trying to escape.

Fire formed underneath his feet as Bai Yunfei stepped through the air over the river. Xiao Lan was traveling beneath him over the surface of the water, though its movements didn't disturb the surface of the water in the slightest, as no ripples were coming out from where Xiao Lan stepped from.

Bai Yunfei came to a stop roughly five kilometers afterwards. They were in a valley now, with two tall mountains standing next to each other and a river flowing nearby.

As he came to a stop, the group chasing him from the city came to a stop several meters away.

Bai Yunfei looked over to see who was chasing him.

There was a late-stage Soul Exalt, two mid-stage Soul Exalts, and five early-stage Soul Exalts. There was also a late-stage class six soulbeast, two mid-stage class six soulbeasts, and three early-stage class six soulbeasts.

Almost everyone here had soulbeasts of their own!

This was definitely due to their close proximity to the Soulbeast Forest. With how wide the Tianhun Continent was, it was rare for people to have contracted soulbeasts, even Soul Exalts.

"Ah? He's here?" Bai Yunfei gave a small start in surprise. There was someone he 'knew'! This person was one of the people that tried to capture the blue-eyes wyrm earlier, the late-stage Soul Exalt! He came riding on over with an equally familiar soulbeast,

the late-stage class six tornado bird!

Bai Yunfei also noticed one of the mid-stage Soul Exalts had a familiar looking mid-stage class six three-eyed kong bear.

Come to think of it, Bai Yunfei could've sworn he remembered these people calling themselves as people from the 'Xing'....

"Didn't think I'd meet them here. Guess I can't avoid a fight this time...." He sighed, "I didn't think much when they were with the soul refiner, but they probably have some sort of connection to the Soul Refining School....."

As he was thinking, the other group of people overtook it, seeing to Bai Yunfei being completely surrounded.

Xing Qiufeng glared at Bai Yunfei first, and then to Xiao Qi and the blue-eyes wyrm next to him. "Are you the one who killed a man from the Xing?!" He demanded.

"I am the one." Bai Yunfei nodded.

His 'confession' surprised Xing Qiufeng a little bit. "You've balls!" He replied, "Who are you to look down upon the house of Xing? To injure and kill so many innocent people without remorse, prepare to die here today!"

But Bai Yunfei snorted in disdain. "You of all people want to talk to me about reason? Don't play the idiot. You just want to take revenge for Xing Luo. If you've the skill, then come. If you can win, then you can deal with me as you wish!!"

"You!!" Xing Qiufeng cried out, "The audacity of you! I should cripple you and take you back to the Xing to see how to punish you!"

"Take him!!"

Everyone with him flew into action at his command, elemental energy of all kinds shining in the air to fill up the place with light.

"Let's get this over with!"

Bai Yunfei spat, his Cataclysmic Seal spitting out the essence

fireseed in it to have Bai Yunfei absorb it into him.

“Chirp!”

“Roar!!”

Xiao Qi and Xiao Lan flew into action faster than the opposing side. Xiao Qi's wings unfurled to a wingspan of ten meters as the Wind and Lightning Feathers shined in him. Hundreds of blades of wind flew through the air to attack the people to the left of Bai Yunfei. Xiao Lan's entire body grew in size until it was ten meters in height and blue in color. At the same time, the river underneath its feet churned violently before four waterspouts surged into the air to stab at the four people to Bai Yunfei's right with the sharpness of swords.

Their sudden actions surprised the group, and all of them were forced to put up a barrier in order to protect themselves before it collided with them.

Due to his preconceived notion that Bai Yunfei was 'too weak', Xing Qiufeng didn't see a need to act until the blue-eyes wyrm suddenly grew in size. When it saw the wyrm in its proper size, his eyes widened in shock.

“That's...that's the blue-eyes wyrm!!”

There had been a sliver of doubt when Xing Qiufeng first saw the wyrm. Since it was miniature-sized, he didn't think too much about it. But now that he was face to face with it, and its aura was fully revealed....he remembered it as the same one he met in the Soulbeast Forest several months ago!

How could he not be surprised!

In the next second, Xing Qiufeng shivered, his eyes radiating with fear!

“If the blue-eyes wyrm is here, then....”

Before he could answer his own question, someone suddenly

cried out in abject horror from the elemental energy filled area in front of him!

Chapter 493: Killing Those Who Came To Kill

In the one moment the elemental energy of the enemy descended into the area, the aura of three people suddenly vanished!

They had been killed!!

In the moment Xing Qiufeng connected the thoughts between the blue-eyes wyrm and Bai Yunfei, the fight had already its first casualties. Eyes narrowing together, Xing Qiufeng brought out his long green spear and pushed his soulforce into the spear to prepare himself for the enemy ahead. Underneath his feet, the tornado bird trilled angrily and shot a ten meter large tornado ahead.

But at the same time, a long crimson spear came forth from the area along with a person holding onto it!

It was Bai Yunfei!

He was as strong as Xing Qiufeng at this moment; a late-stage Soul Exalt!

‘Coil’ form, activated!

The tornado shot from the tornado bird was already upon him as he emerged from low-visibility area behind him. Without slowing down in speed, Bai Yunfei’s entire body suddenly flashed orange in light—+12 additional effect of the Cataclysmic Seal, activated!

“Boom!!”

The tornado collided against Bai Yunfei’s barrier mercilessly, but it had done nothing to Bai Yunfei at all!

Xing Qiufeng narrowed his eyes as he regarded Bai Yunfei’s approach coldly. His spear shivered slightly before it shot forward, elemental wind aiding it in its speed and its sharpness. A near invisible tip made from elemental wind extended from the spear’s tip to fly towards Bai Yunfei!

Though he didn't expect to be facing off against another spear user, Bai Yunfei didn't falter. Choosing not to dodge or block the spear strike, Bai Yunfei clenched his spear tightly and stabbed outwards with it!

“Boom....clink!!”

The elemental energies of the two spears collided, each spear trying to fight against the other for dominance!

Then, under the terrified eyes of Xing Qiufeng, he watched as his high-earth tier spear start to crack and melt underneath the might of the other spear!

With the Fire-tipped Spear being a mid-heaven tier soul armament, there was no way the high-earth tier spear would be able to go against it!

“Boom!!”

Countless tendrils of elemental fire filled the air from where it exploded upon the contact of the two spears.

It was the +10 additional effect of the Fire-tipped Spear, the explosion!

Xing Qiufeng hadn't expected for the explosion to happen, much less his spear breaking from the contact. As the spear crumbled in his hand, the power from the collision traveled from the spear remnants into his arm and fractured it in multiple places before being flung away!

If not for the tornado bird exhaling a wall of wind to stop Bai Yunfei from chasing after them, Xing Qiufeng would've most likely been yet another casualty in this battle!

“It's him! It's really him!!”

Xing Qiufeng was astounded. He couldn't even think properly with the realization he just felt. Never had he possibly imagined that the person in front of him today would be the very same

person who terrified him so much before back in the Soulbeast Forest!

The tornado bird was only a late-stage class six soulbeast, its manipulation of elemental wind was perfect enough to stop Bai Yunfei from chasing after them. The wall of wind bounced Bai Yunfei away strong enough to buy them enough time, and to force Bai Yunfei from launching a secondary attack.

“Ah!!”

Just as Bai Yunfei stopped himself in the air, he heard a scream from behind, and then the disappearance of two more auras! It would appear that one of them had died before they could even scream.

But the person who screamed out prior to his death caused Xing Qiufeng to cry out loud in anger, “Third brother!”

From where the battle was taking place with Xiao Qi and Xiao Lan, the blue-eyes wyrm stepped away from the river back onto dry ground. It raised its giant head up with a sinister look in its eyes. In between its sharp teeth, there was the body of a person!

This person had been one of the mid-stage Soul Exalts that had attacked it back in the Soulbeast Forest. He was the attendant of the house of Xing and Xing Qiufeng’s younger brother, Xing Qiugu!

As if sensing Xing Qiufeng’s line of sight, the blue-eyes wyrm turned over to look back at him. In its eyes was a sense of vengeful joy, and a bit of disdain....

Naturally, the blue-eyes wyrm knew just who Xing Qiufeng and Xing Qiugu were. Back in the Soulbeast Forest, the blue-eyes wyrm had nearly lost its life, if not its freedom if not for Bai Yunfei to save him from their ambush. How could it not feel happy taking revenge on these people?

Opening its jaws wide, it spat Xing Qiugu’s corpse as if spitting out a piece of inedible meat. Letting loose a mighty roar to the

heavens, it thrashed its tail to the river so that it could use them to shoot down the rest of its enemies with the arrows formed from it.

To the side of the blue-eyes wyrm, there was a black crescent-shaped hole in the riverbank. It was near enough to the river to have water fill in the hole.

Two splashing sounds were heard as the corpse of a single person fell into the water--this was the man that hadn't had time to scream. Xiao Qi had bisected the man in half by using the Spatial Edge to kill him.

In the eyes of Xiao Qi and the blue-eyes wyrm, these people in front of them weren't even strong enough to withstand even a single blow!

There had been five early-stage Soul Exalts and two mid-stage Soul Exalts. But in less than two minutes, only two of the seven remained!

“Boom!!”

In the middle when Xing Qiufeng was taking in the horrifying sight, a mountainous sized object broke through the wind barrier of the tornado bird to come slamming into them with terrifying speed!

Since Xing Qiufeng was distracted by the death of Xing Qiugu, Bai Yunfei saw no reason to not attack him with the Cataclysmic Seal.

It broke through the wind barrier and flew overhead Xing Qiufeng as he tried to fly. Come to an abrupt stop, it dropped down immediately!

Right where the tornado bird was!

Squawking in fear, the tornado bird surrounded itself in green light before the Cataclysmic Seal smashed into it, bringing it down to the riverbank below before flying back out later.

He didn't attack the bird again. His real target was Xing Qiufeng!

The Cataclysmic Seal returned to Bai Yunfei, forming a small platform underneath his feet so he didn't have to use his elemental energy to remain in the skies. By kicking off against the Cataclysmic Seal, Bai Yunfei was able to increase his momentum to fly towards Xing Qiufeng!

“Ah!!”

Furious, Xing Qiufeng's body lit up with green light as he summoned as much elemental wind to him as he could. It manifested around him in the form of a giant tornado, protecting him from any potential external attack. Two giant blades of wind simultaneously flew out from the tornado before Xing Qiufeng had them fly towards Bai Yunfei to cut him down!

Bai Yunfei swapped the Fire-tipped Spear to his left hand to clench his right fist tightly. The Ardent Sun Glove shined brilliantly with red light before he punched outwards! A single fireball about twenty meters in circumference formed, slamming into the two blades of wind when they came.

“Boom!!!”

A fiery explosion rocked the world around them with great enough energy to concuss the waters below. It kicked up into the skies in a decently large amount of water, falling back down to the ground thanks to gravity.

The two blades of wind and fireball had canceled each other out.

Another blade of fire had been formed shortly after the first explosion, cutting into the tornado protecting Xing Qiufeng!

For a moment, the tornado came to an abrupt stop as the blade of fire cut into it, and then a gap opened up right where the blade cut into it!

Bai Yunfei leapt through the opening in the tornado, much to Xing Qiufeng's shock and despair. One Bai Yunfei became three, and then each with the same exact expression of indifference, they

stabbed at him with their Fire-tipped Spears!

Chapter 494: Yue Feng's Goal

“Clack....”

Bai Yunfei stepped onto a nearby boulder with a clack.

Right by his side was the blue-eyes wyrm, already back to its miniature form, and Xiao Qi roosting on his right shoulder. Underneath Bai Yunfei was the peak of one of the two mountains.

He looked down over the mountain, looking over the the valley where a battle had just taken place. Aside from the fifty craters that adorned the riverbanks, nothing else about the valley seemed off.

Many of these craters were filled with water from the river, so the results of the battle didn't look too devastating to the environment.

But that didn't take away from the facts: eight bodies were currently lying down on the ground.

The search and pursuit team that had gone after Bai Yunfei to kill him were on the inverse killed by him.

Two of their contracted soulbeasts were killed, and the others had fled. Bai Yunfei didn't bother chasing after them. A soulbeast without its contracted soul cultivator, where else could it go but return to the Soulbeast Forest?

The entirety of the battle that took the lives of these ten beings took only a short five minutes....

Xing Qiufeng was the only one Bai Yunfei killed. The others were claimed by Xiao Qi and the blue-eyes wyrm.

“These have to be at least half the fighting force of the Xing, right? I heard their house head was only a peak-stage Soul Exalt, but he's not here....Xing Luo said before that an ancestor of theirs was a Soul King, wonder if that's true.”

Bai Yunfei didn't really fear if the peak late-stage Soul Exalt, Xing Qihong would give chase, but if the so-called Soul King were to appear and give chase, there would definitely be a great ordeal for Bai Yunfei.

"Ugh," Bai Yunfei sighed. "Better not take chances and fly away. Beats sticking around and fighting the rest of the Xing."

Truth be told, Bai Yunfei worried the ancestor. The Xing shouldn't have caught up to him so fast, but they did. Walking on foot would be a silly idea now with that in mind.

"But first things first..." The Tempest Sword appeared besides him.

"You've been following me since you left Ventia City, what are your intentions? Continue with your stalking and I won't be as polite as I was before!"

His voice was directed towards a portion of the river below.

There was someone....there?!

Bai Yunfei continued to stare at the area a little longer, as if waiting for something. On the other hand, Xiao Qi and the blue-eyes wyrm stared curiously at Bai Yunfei, unsure why he was speaking to nothing but air.

"Haha!! So you saw me? You're good, I'll tell you that....and here I thought I was completely hidden!"

A good several seconds later, the embarrassed chuckles of a person responded to Bai Yunfei. From the foot of the mountain, a person leapt up to the canopus of a nearby tree.

This person was the very same man that had been speaking to Yu Li and Nangong Yuexia earlier, Yue Feng!

He kicked off from the tree, leaping from footrest to footrest to ascend up the mountain and to a respectful distance away from Bai Yunfei.

Bai Yunfei said and did nothing but stare. This man didn't seem to harbor any ill-will towards him, but he was still unsure what exactly his intentions were.

Yue Feng came to a stop. He smiled towards Bai Yunfei, "Haha, I am no enemy, my friend, and neither am I with the Xing. I don't wish to cause any trouble."

The brows on Bai Yunfei's face furrowed together. This man in front of him was only a late-stage Soul Exalt—not a level that could intimidate him—but Bai Yunfei had the feeling he was a lot stronger and would be harder to deal with than Xing Qiufeng. There was also a rather silly-looking little brown bear slung around his back, and Bai Yunfei could see it was a late-stage class six!

"Why are you following me?" Bai Yunfei asked.

"I won't lie," Yue Feng smiled, "I'm following you because I'm waiting for somebody."

"What do you mean?"

"What I'm after has to do with the Xing. Since the Xing are chasing you, then the person I'm after will be with them. So if I follow you, I'll meet him."

"Do you have a grudge with the Xing?"

"Ah, no, that's not it." Yue Feng dismissed Bai Yunfei's question, but he spoke again with a cold gleam in his eyes. "The person I've a grudge with is currently a guest of the Xing. He's hiding there, and even I don't have the strength to go after him as he hides. That is, until you came today....hehe, I hope you don't mind, my friend, that I will take on that man when the Xing comes again. I'm sure you'll find it helpful to you."

So that was it, Bai Yunfei realized. This man wanted to use Bai Yunfei as bait for someone, but that in itself wasn't too much of a bad thing since this man had nothing to do with him.

And Bai Yunfei had nothing to do with his grudges.

Not caring for the story, Bai Yunfei waved his Tempest Sword to him. Stepping onto it, he prepared to fly away.

Yue Feng spoke up in a hurry, “Woah, hold on! Brother, you can’t leave! If you go, then the person I’m after might no come!”

He really didn’t want Bai Yunfei to leave for a reason, of course. Should the person he was after come, he wouldn’t be coming alone. The head of the Xing would most definitely be with him, and Bai Yunfei would be the one to fight him, leaving Yue Feng open to fight the other. But if Bai Yunfei left, then that’d mean Yue Feng would have to fight the two of them without any help.

“It doesn’t concern me.” Was the response. Bai Yunfei was already on the sword, and the blue-eyes wyrm leaping on it with him.

“Don’t fly then! If you walk, they’ll be here in a fl—” As he was pleading with a finger pointing to Ventia City, a spike in soulforce alerted him to something.

“Haha, they’re here!”

His look of joy was not reflected by Bai Yunfei. Looking towards the city, Bai Yunfei saw two bolts of gold and purple light fly on over towards them.

The second volley was here, and quick too!

And these two men were both....peak late-stage Soul Exalts!

One of them men was surely the head of the Xing, but who was the other?

“The metal-type soul cultivator on the left is the head of the Xing, Xing Qiuhong. The lightning-type soul cultivator on the right is the strongest guest of the Xing, a wanderer infamous in the the Northern Ridge Province. Zi Mei the Wanderer’. The person I’m after is him....”

Yue Feng spoke to Bai Yunfei with a frown. The sight of Zi Mei had brought out a murderous intent from the man ever since he appeared.

“There are two people there, and two of us. We’ll take one a piece, no problems with that?”

Chapter 495: To Each, Their Battle!

The way Yue Feng spoke, it seemed that he had all the confidence that he could deal with Zi Mei, and that he had faith in Bai Yunfei being able to take down the peak late-stage Soul Exalt, Xing Qiuhong.

Bai Yunfei nodded. He had been able to kill peak late-stage Soul Exalts since he was an early-stage Soul Exalt, today would be no different. He was slightly happy that Yue Feng was here, fighting against two peak late-stage Soul Exalts would've been annoying enough to make his victory uncertain.

"I've heard the Xing has a Soul King ancestor. Do you know if it's true or not?" Bai Yunfei asked, deciding to kill some time before the two Soul Exalts arrived to confirm.

"A Soul King?" Yue Feng repeated with some disdain. "Hehe....that's what they tell the entire world at the very least. Having a Soul King in any family brings up their name a lot, but according to what I know, they used to have an early-stage Soul King before."

"Used to?" Bai Yunfei asked, curious on the usage of the past tense.

"Used to." Yue Feng laughed, "Outsiders might not know about it, but that Soul King died four years ago!"

"Hehe, Soul Kings might be invincible in the eyes of ordinary soul cultivators, but to other Soul Kings, those at the early-stage have only managed to open the door. Four years ago, the Xing's Soul King fought another for a treasure and died as a result!"

Yue Feng was quite knowledgeable about the situation of the house of Xing. Since Zi Mei was hiding with them, Yue Feng found it prudent to do a cursory investigation of them. This piece of information came to him entirely by accident, but not many people

knew of it. It was in the best interest of the Xing to not let anyone know, since it'd be unfavorable to them.

Bai Yunfei sighed in relief. If this was the case, he didn't have much to worry about now.

By now, the two Soul Exalts from the Xing were here, allowing Bai Yunfei to have a better look at them. Xing Qiuhong was flying on top of a green sword, and Zi Mei had a giant chained sword underneath his feet—they were both using flying soul armaments!

The two came to an eventual stop, the light from their soul armaments petering out.

Xing Qiuhong wore a golden robe. He looked to be in his fifties, and his face was contorted with fury.

Zi Mei looked younger and in his forties. He wore a dark purple robe, and just like his name, his eyebrows were equally purple. To look even more strange, his eyes were like those of a serpent, giving him the aura of a very sinister person.

Xing Qiuhong said nothing at first when they stopped. It was Zi Mei who stared at Yue Feng with wide-open eyes, "It's you!!"

His voice was hoarse-sounding and nearly threatened to give the chills to anyone that heard it.

Yue Feng sent him a death glare, "I've finally found you, Zi Mei. This time, don't think on trying to escape! The lives of the fifty-three people in Frond Village will be paid for with your life!"

This was the grudge Yue Feng had with Zi Mei!

Yue Feng traveled to many places in his training, a small mountain village being one of those places. The villagers there had been nice and welcoming. But upon the second visit, Yue Feng was greeted with the sight of the village ruins! Not a single living person was in sight, only the maimed remnants of its inhabitants from what appeared to be the result of a beast eating them!

His later investigations found that it was because of Zi Mei that these villagers died! They had died solely for the sake of ‘feeding’ his contracted soulbeast.

Ever since that day, Yue Feng spent every moment tracking down Yue Feng like a man possessed. On their first meeting, Yue Feng managed to kill his soulbeast, but Zi Mei had escaped and fled to the Xing for refuge.

Zi Mei had a dark look on his face as he stared hatefully at Yue Feng. “Lord Xing,” he spoke to Xing Qiuhong, “I have some matters with this one. I will kill him myself. I hope that you will take care of the other one yourself.”

And now the situation was put into stone. Two one on one battles, to each their own.

Without any words other than ‘good luck’ to Bai Yunfei, Yue Feng took off to the left to bring Zi Mei with him away so they could fight without worry of the other.

Neither Bai Yunfei nor Xing Qiuhong bothered for the Yue Feng or Zi Mei. “Are you the one who killed my family?!” Xing Qiuhong demanded.

Bai Yunfei chose to look away rather than to look at Xing Qiuhong’s hateful eyes, “Don’t try to play the victim here. Your son isn’t innocent by any means, even in his death. And those people after him came of their own accord to kill me, not the other way around. If Your Xing wants to try and kill me, then they should in turn be prepared to be killed.”

“Hah! Alright then!!” Xing Qiuhong exploded with anger, “You are but one man challenging the entirety of the house of Xing, brat! I will torture you before I kill you!!”

“The entirety of the Xing, you say? Is there even anyone left in it?” Bai Yunfei shot back, “And just so you know, when Xing Luo sought me out, he ended up dying to his own poisonous weapon.”

“Yo—” Xing Qiuhong’s body trembled at the mere mention of his son’s death. “Die!!” He roared with as much hate as he could muster.

“Ah—that word. Your son said the same thing before he died....” Bai Yunfei snorted. Mustering soulforce to his feet, Bai Yunfei took the first move by flying towards Xing Qiuhong!

Instead of using his flying soul armament, Xing Qiuhong chose instead to fly at Bai Yunfei with a giant metallic axe in his right hand. His left hand thrust forward, shooting a jet of black light towards Bai Yunfei!

It followed Bai Yunfei as it moved, twisting and turning to follow Bai Yunfei’s movements as it swelled in size and let loose an ear-splitting hiss!

This was no arrow, but a black python!! And from its aura....it was a peak late-stage class six soulbeast!

Xing Qiuhong had a such a powerful soulbeast as its partner!

“A darkgold boa!!” Bai Yunfei realized. This was a rare species of soulbeast that couldn’t become a class seven, but it was endowed with the ability to have a dual affinity of darkness and metal. It was adept in hiding, as proved by how it had been hiding in Xing Qiuhong’s sleeves without Bai Yunfei knowing about it.

Extending to several dozen meters longer than its previous size with its tail still wrapped around Xing Qiuhong, the darkgold boa moved to devour Bai Yunfei.

It came at him, eyes golden and incisors ready to clamp down on him. A putrid stench wafting from its maw.

Kicking against the elemental platform holding him up, Bai Yunfei leapt on top of the boa and then use its head to run towards Xing Qiuhong.

“Roar!!”

The blue-eyes wyrm roared once, its body exploding with blue light as it prepared for an airborne battle. Its giant body leapt up into the air, and then....came falling back down onto the boa's head as if to ride it!

This 'intelligent' move had caught the boa off guard. With the sudden weight, the boa was forced to fall down towards the river with the wyrm!

Via communication with Bai Yunfei, Xiao Qi chirped and followed the wyrm down to attack the boa.

Bai Yunfei was already in his 'coil' form. The Cataclysmic Seal was protecting him, and his Fire-tipped Spear was out in his hands to attack the incoming blur of golden light.

At the same time several hundred meters away on the other mountain, three furious sources of soulforce were blazing wildly as they clashed with one another.

The battles had begun!

Chapter 496: The Conclusion of a Battle

“Hiss!!!”

There was an agonized hiss followed by a tremendous explosion on the riverbed below. Water surged into the skies due to displacement before falling back down to refill the new huge crater with water and rubble.

The hiss came from the darkgold boa, countless streams of golden light escaping from it along with a tinge of black to attack the two enemies above it.

“Roarr!!”

The blue-eyes wyrm unleashed a roar of its own, turning the elemental water around it into a giant barrier of water. It protected the wyrm from any of the boa’s attacks, but crumbled after the onslaught ended.

To the side, Xiao Qi didn’t bother to use any elemental energy to protect itself. Glowing violet and azure, it disappeared into a blur and dodged each of the golden rays without damage.

The rays slammed against the cliff behind Xiao Qi, exploding and sending rubble flying everywhere.

In response to the attack, Xiao Qi summoned five hundred blades of wind and then another five hundred bolts of purple lightning.

Fearful at the attacks coming at it, the darkgold boa tried to swim away from the area, only to have the blue-eyes wyrm step into the waters and send three whips of water to coil around the serpent and hold it in place!

Hissing furiously, the boa extended its tail out from its confines and swung around the blue-eyes wyrm to whip the wyrm!

The wyrm roared in pain, stumbling backwards from the blow with a scary-looking wound on its waist. From its expression, the

wound had been a decent one.

Its distraction allowed the boa to escape from its confines, but it was a little too late! All five hundred of the blades and lightning bolts was already raining down on it!

“Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!....”

Countless explosions rocked the river, along with a very furious hissing from the boa as water splashed everywhere. The destruction had been so heavy that even the blue-eyes wyrm chose to retreat a hundred meters back onto dry land.

The explosion came to an end a short two seconds later. Now that the winds and bolts were gone, the battlefield was silent aside from the one hiss of fear from the boa!

“Hiss!!!”

Several seconds later, Xiao Qi’s chirping was heard as well!

Five black dots appeared in front of Xiao Qi when it spread its wings wide. Feeding more soulforce into these five dots, they grew in length before becoming five ten-meter long blades of emptiness!

The Spatial Edges!

Upon formation, the five Spatial Edges flew noiselessly down to the ground and into the water.

There wasn’t even a splashing sound when it touched the water. The water that touched the Spatial Edge had disappeared along with the hissing of the snake!

.....

The death of the darkgold boa wasn’t lost to Xing Qiuhong. He paled when he felt its aura get snuffed out, and then he spat out a mouthful of blood!

“Im...impossible!!”

Xing Qiuhong couldn’t believe it. In just a short few minutes, his

soulbeast partner had been killed by two soulbeasts even weaker it!

The short few moments he spent fighting Bai Yunfei was already enough to surprise him. Through some sort of secret technique, Bai Yunfei had brought himself to the same level of strength he was! And the soul armament he was using was even more surprising!

He was in bad shape now. With how a soul contract works, once the contracted soulbeast dies, the soul cultivator would be dealt a tremendous amount of damage, meaning he had lost his focus!

And what did it meant to lose one's focus in a battle between the mighty? A swift and merciless death, of course!

Xing Qiuhong's sudden decline in fighting prowess didn't escape Bai Yunfei's eyes. Capitalizing on it as fast as he could, Bai Yunfei stored away his Fire-tipped Spear so that his hands were free to go through several seals.

The Dual Dragon Burst!!

Two coils of fire spun around his arms, building up energy and fire as Bai Yunfei continued through the seals. A hint of purple lightning ran through the coils before the dragons burst forth from Bai Yunfei's arms!

Seemingly roaring as they exited, the dragons grew until they reached ten meters in width and immeasurable in strength!

With Bai Yunfei's strength, he was able to fire off the Dual Dragon Bursts before Xing Qiuhong could even recover, speeding towards the man faster than Xing Qiuhong could respond!

Paling again in the face at the sight of the two dragons, Xing Qiuhong knew he couldn't escape in time. He dropped his golden axe in front of him, trying to supplement his defense with his elemental metal.

“Boom!!!”

The loudest explosion yet rocked the world as the two dragons engulfed the man and traveled into the other mountain!

The earth trembled as the dragons smashed into it. Collapsing, the right part of the mountain fractured in multiple places and eventually tumbled down to the base of the mountain! Even with so much destruction caused by it, the dragons were still trying to force their way through it!

Within the two dragons, the aura of Xing Qiuhong started to grow weaker as his defenses weakened as well....

“Chirp!!”

Flying to Bai Yunfei’s side, Xiao Qi glared at the two dragons and flapped its wings. Three separate Spatial Edges flew out from its wings and towards Xing Qiuhong!

Xing Qiuhong, at the moment, was trying his best to deal with the elemental fire all around him. Fear was setting into his eyes as the elemental fire started to overpower him. If he didn’t know any better, he would’ve thought these two dragons were formed by the power of a Soul King, not a Soul Exalt!

It was to his great shock to see three blades of nothing sail into the dragons and towards him. As they approached, Xing Qiuhong began to feel the bells of danger start going off.

His eyes went bloodshot, he himself unwilling to die just like this.

“No!!!!”

He roared, desperation finally kicking in. The soulforce in his body began to spark wildly as the elemental metal around him slowly started to force back the elemental fire!

Xing Qiuhong was....sacrificing his essence metalseed for more power!

But it was already too late!!

The three Spatial Edges cut through the fire and into his body, leaving behind parts of his body before it hit the mountain and disappeared....

With three separate Spatial Edges hitting him, only ten percent of Xing Qiuhong's body was left, such as a part of his arm and his head. But even those two were quickly swallowed up by the now unchecked elemental fire.....

“Ah!!!!”

From the other side of the mountain, Bai Yunfei felt the aura of Zi Mei get extinguished as well!

Yue Feng had somehow killed his opponent just as quickly as Bai Yunfei!

The battle was over!

Chapter 497: Apprentice of Elder Hai

The fires from the Dual Dragon Burst burned away at the mountains for a while before Bai Yunfei cancelled out the technique. Waving his hand, he dispelled the remaining fires and watched as the rest of the mountain crumbled. With another wave, the space ring of Xing Qiuhong was brought over to him.

He took the ring into his hand calmly and then looked to where Xiao Qi was. As of this moment, the bird was curled in on itself as it went through its levelling up mode. Bai Yunfei smiled.

Xing Qiuhong would've succumbed to the Dual Dragon Burst even without Xiao Qi's assistance. But by landing the killing blow, Xiao Qi had essentially 'stole' the experience, an act Bai Yunfei was already familiar with from the bird.

In the rivers below, the blue-eyes wyrm was just satisfying itself by taking the head of the darkgold boa into its mouth and swallowed it whole. The water in the river surged upwards to surround the wyrm, serving as a barrier for it to digest the energy of the soulgem. From the outside, it looked as if the blue-eyes wyrm was in an 'egg' of sorts.

Bai Yunfei turned to the left this time, where Yue Feng had been fighting. The elemental energy from that direction was already gone for the most part, since Yue Feng had already killed Zi Mei.

Bai Yunfei had to admit, he was surprised. He didn't expect Yue Feng to be that fast in dealing with his opponent.

Zi Mei was a peak late-stage Soul Exalt, and Yue Feng only a late-stage. It was only a small word that divided the two classifications, but the division in reality for most soul cultivators was far bigger than what a word could possibly define. Even the aid of a late-stage class six soulbeast wouldn't be enough to make up for this difference.

Yue Feng was very clearly not like ‘most’ soul cultivators.

Bai Yunfei wasn’t the only one that had an armada of soul armaments and soul skills enough to kill people stronger than him.

Bai Yunfei dispelled the ‘coil’ form, feeling as his soulforce started to wash back into him. He stared off towards the direction of Ventia City.

“Now that lord Xing is dead, will the Xing stop sending people after me? They shouldn’t have anyone left.”

That last line struck a chord in Bai Yunfei, “Does that mean I pretty much destroyed an entire family?”

A sigh escaped from his lips, “This is why power is so important. Back then, I had to flee for my life when a Soul Ancestor was strong enough to put me in danger. But now, I can easily kill a peak late-stage Soul Exalt, and his family to boot....”

Yue Feng chose this time to come back to Bai Yunfei. There was a melancholic light in Yue Feng’s eyes, as if there was something weighing him down. He didn’t look hurt from his battle, but nothing other than that. The orange bear on his right shoulder looked slightly depressed as well, but that was more likely due to the amount of soulforce consumption.

Before he was too close to Bai Yunfei, Yue Feng made sure to hide his sadness and replace it with a smile. When he saw the destroyed mountain peak caused by Bai Yunfei, a hint of shock passed through his eyes. He also looked curiously at Xiao Qi, but turned back to Bai Yunfei to say, “Haha! You’re an amazing one....I never thought that you’d kill Xing Qiuhong faster than I killed Zi Mei.”

Bai Yunfei smiled back, “You weren’t too far behind.”

“Come to think of it, I never introduced myself. My name is Yue Feng, whats yours?”

“Bai Yunfei.”

“Bai Yunfei?” The name gave pause to Yue Feng for a moment. He had heard this name somewhere, “Bai Yunfei....sounds familiar. Where have I heard it?”

It came to him in the next second, “I remember! The Crafting School! Bai Yunfei! You’re the disciple of headmaster Zi Jin! My master mentioned you before!”

“Your Master?” This time, it was Bai Yunfei who looked startled, “And your master was...?”

“My master is Hai Dongqing, a good friend of senior Zi Jin. You’ve meet him before, I’m sure.”

“Senior Hai?!” Bai Yunfei’s eyebrows flew to his brows, “You’re senior Hai’s disciple, brother Yue? Haha, what a coincidence to meet you here.”

Bai Yunfei had a pretty good impression of Hai Dongqing. Back when Bai Yunfei and Tang Xinyun returned from the Forest Pass Province, Hai Dongqing and Zi Jin had both been pouring over the game of Go. Unfortunately for Hai Dongqing, he was hopeless at the game, but he wasn’t a bad person in general, and Bai Yunfei liked him a decent amount.

Hai Dongqing continued to visit the Crafting School for a decent amount of time after that too. It wasn’t until he got Zi Jin to make him a Go board and an amazing soul armament that he finally left.

There was another thing....Hai Dongqing was one of the five great wandering soul cultivators as well.

If Yue Feng was Hai Dongqing’s disciple, then him being so strong wasn’t too strange.

“Yes, what a coincidence it was. I never thought to meet you, though my master has high praise for you....He’s mentioned many times to me that he took on an apprentice far too late, and that his good friend Zi Jin’s apprentice was nearly stronger than he was. That’s why he picked me as his apprentice, though he says that I

can't lose out to the disciple of Zi Jin....

“But I know now that you are without a doubt a true genius, brother Bai. A mid-stage Soul Exalt at your age and being able to kill a peak late-stage Soul Exalt, words can't even describe this....”

“You over flatter me too much, brother Yue. I am only just a product of fate and happenstance.”

There was a happy trill from Xiao Qi as it finished its levelling up. Bai Yunfei smiled as he turned his head to look at Xiao Qi.

Right now, Xiao Qi's strength was strong enough to be a late-stage class six almost!

Xiao Qi hadn't that feeling before, and Bai Yunfei didn't think that killing the peak late-stage class six darkgold boa and then peak late-stage Soul Exalt Xing Qiuhong would grant so much experience to the bird! If Xiao Qi continued to grow like this, the bird would be the first to breakthrough out of the three of them!

Yue Feng's eyes were wide open with shock, “Brother Bai, your soulbeast....how hasn't it become a class seven yet....?”

“Xiao Qi is a special type of soulbeast, being a variant.” He smiled.

“A variant soulbeast!” A look of envy crossed over Yue Feng's face, “Wow, the one in a ten thousand kind of variant soulbeast? That's....”

“Roar!!”

An ecstatic roar from the river below interrupted Yue Feng. The ‘egg’ in the river fell apart, revealing the blue-eyes wyrm in it. Its wounds were all completely healed, and its body shined a fresh blue light and along with a tinge of black! Like Xiao Qi, its aura was slightly different now that it was a peak late-stage class six!

“Uh....that....that....” Yue Feng's eyes opened wide again, “Brother Bai, this blue-eyes wyrm, why....”

Bai Yunfei coughed. “Haha, this one is a variant as well...”

Yue Feng was speechless.

“Your contracted soulbeast must be that one?” Yue Feng spoke after a very brief moment of silence. He was pointing at Xiao Qi who was now on Bai Yunfei’s shoulder.

“But then that blue-eyes wyrm must be....” He pointed at the wyrm coming up towards them.

“Yes. It’s a soulbeast that decided to follow me after I saved it in the Soulbeast Forest. It’s a very smart soulbeast and wanted to follow me for a while.”

Again, Yue Feng had nothing to say about that.

The sky was getting dark now, and Bai Yunfei didn’t miss that. “Brother Yue, I will be leaving this place, what about you...?”

“Ah, I’ll be returning to Ventia City. I’ve some friends there that want to go into the Soulbeast Forest.”

He looked off to the direction of Ventia City. Yue Feng initially thought that it’d take a lot longer to take his revenge, but now that he was done with it, he figured he could go find Yu Li and Nangong Yuexia.

Bai Yunfei nodded with a polite salute, “In that case, I’ll take my leave then. Until we meet again, brother Yue!”

“Until we meet again!” Yue Feng saluted back.

And so the two left, to each their separate ways....

.....

Ventia City, in the mansion of the Xing.

“Ah!!”

There was a mournful scream that broke the silence of the night. It had been very weak, and barely audible beyond the walls of the compound.

Right now in this moment, there was a bone-chilling event that was happening to the number one family in the Northern Ridge Province....

Chapter 498: The Tragedy of the Xing!

(First)

A while back, Xing Qiufeng and Zi Mei had only just left the compound to chase after Bai Yunfei.

Within the compound was a single hidden room.

This was the most secretive room the house of Xing had in its compound, containing many of its most precious treasures and such. Only a select few knew of its existence, and even less were even able to enter. Even Xing Luo, the second son of the current head of the house, wasn't able to enter.

In this moment where it seemed no one would be in the room, there was actually a single person searching through the place. All of the precious treasures that had been stocked neatly on the shelves were being thrown oh-so casually through the air by this person, as if uninterested by the things in his search.

At the entrance of the hidden room stood a single person dressed richly in fine silk. The person didn't move from its spot, though his body trembled violently as if fighting against something as he watched the other person ransacking the place. The man was furious, but at the same time, terrified.

This man was the eldest son of Xing Qiuhong, Xing Shu.

Bai Yunfei saw this person once before actually. Back in the Soulbeast Forest, he had been the young man being protected by the others when they fought the blue-eyes wyrm. They had went into the forest for Xing Shu to find a contracted soulbeast, but thanks to Bai Yunfei, they returned to Ventia City empty-handed.

A precious guest of the Xing had been killed by him at that time, and Xing Qiuhong was all too furious about it.

The person currently ransacking the room was a friend of the one who died, the late-stage Soul Exalt. The two of them were at the

moment being supported by the Xing and were highly regarded by Xing Qiuhong. But when all the experts went after to kill Bai Yunfei, this man took advantage of it to find the secret room and search for something.

Xing Shu was very afraid that this man would injure or hurt him, but as long as his father came back, then this man could be captured and dealt with.

“It really isn’t....here. Is that thing really not in this room? Or....did Xing Qiuhong take it with him?”

The person muttered as he continued to ransack every single spot and corner in the room. Most of the secret mechanisms and spots were already found by him, but nothing had what he wanted.

He whirled around and stalked towards Xing Shu. Thanks to the illumination of the lightstone there, this man’s face could finally be seen.

He stood at 1.8 meters tall and was cloaked by a black mantle. His short black hair could be seen by his neck, but his face could not....since he was wearing a golden mask.

Stripes of blood were painted on the mask, as if symbolizing scar wounds on a face, giving him a very demonic expression. And to add even more to his mystique, his eyes were a very peculiar combination.

One eye was normal, but the left eye was a strange silver, and its iris was a slit!

Yao Tong.

TL Note: Demon, Devil, Monster, Evil Eye, etc etc.

That was the name Xing Shu knew this man as.

.....

Even from behind his golden mask, the icy glare could easily be felt by Xing Shu. “If you answer my questions, you may live.”

Once again, fear started to swell up in Xing Shu's heart. He didn't plea for his life, though, and nodded his head mutely. He was no idiot. Right now, following the man's directions was the best way he could live.

"Xing Shuangqing, has he returned?"

"Grandfather?!" Xing Shu hadn't expected for the man to ask about his grandfather. He shook his head, however, "Grandfather left ten years ago and hasn't returned."

"Ten years ago...." Yao Tong repeated. Xing Shu didn't seem to be lying. But if this was the case, had his trip here been a waste?

"Has your family never received any messages recently?" He asked another question.

"I....I don't kn...." Xing Shu started to respond, but then when Yao Tong looked dissatisfied, he quickly amended his answer, "Oh! I remember! Three years ago, I think I heard my father mention something about the third uncle coming across grandfather on his journey! He also said grandfather had only said a few quick words before leaving. I don't know anything after that, grandfather hasn't returned since then, I'm telling you...."

"Three years ago!" Yao Tong's eyes lit up, "Do you know if your third uncle brought anything back with him?"

Xing Shu's forehead was dripping with sweat now, "I don't know about that....father never mentioned it before."

His third uncle was Xing Qiugu, one of the fews sent to kill Bai Yunfei and died.

"If this is true, then perhaps Xing Qiugu brought it back home with him....if this place doesn't has it, then it must mean Xing Qiuhong has it with him!" A pensive look entered Yao Tong's eyes. He hadn't accounted for Xing Qiuhong carrying it around, but this meant Yao Tong would just have to wrestle it away from him....

Xing Shu watched as Yao Tong thought to himself, fearful about

accidentally doing something that might anger the man and lead to his death.

Suddenly, Yao Tong's eyes dilated, as if realizing something. He looked up to his left, and then moving quickly, he disappeared from the room!

Xing Shu was surprised to see him go, but it did his heart some good to see him gone. If he was gone, that meant Xing Shu could relax and celebrate that his life had been spared. But before he could even call for help, there was a scream from up above!

.....

Right above the hidden room in the Xing compound.

There in the wide open courtyards of the compound stood a single man dressed in white. His hair was equally white due to his age as a seventy-something year old man.

There was a middle-aged man besides his foot, the fourth attendant to the Xing, Xing Qiuyang.

Xing Qiuyang's eyes were vacant and without light, as he was dead already. But the more surprising thing was the bloody hole straight through his forehead! It looked as if something had ate its way into his head!

A sense of forbidding was starting to settle in the courtyard as everyone started to run away in fright. But before they could even get far, they all fell to the ground, spasmed, and then moved no more.

If one looked closely, several small black lines were flying through the air, and whenever a person was touched by it, they would grasp at their neck in fear and try to scream, but no sound was uttered.

There was a flash of purple light in the courtyard before a giant cat with glowing red eyes and six tails came down to the ground. Even more surprisingly, there were five people wrapped up in its

tails!

These five people were the remaining five Soul Exalts of the Xing! Not a single one of them had escaped, and now, almost every member of the Xing was dead!

Almost was the operative word. For there was still one person left alive.

And that person was Xing Shu!

Chapter 499: The Fourth Elder of the Beast Taming School! (Second)

Xing Shu's face was a deathly sheen of white, his eyes filled with absolute horror as he was wrapped up in the tail of the soulbeast. "Don't kill me!" He cried to the white-robed elder, "Don't kill me!! I'll talk! I'll talk!! Whatever it is, I'll tell you, but please, just don't kill me!!"

The elder gave him a cold glare, "You're a tactful, one, but....I don't need you to talk!"

With a wave of his right hand, Xing Shu was suddenly thrown up to the air by his neck. From the right sleeves of the old man's robes, a bloody red earthworm shot out from it. Its body was entirely slick, and it had no eyes, ears, or nose. Its 'head' was shaped just like a drill!

Under the frightened eyes of Xing Shu, the strange soulbeast landed on his body. With a 'shlick', the soulbeast dug....into Xing Shu's forehead!

Xing Shu's face slackened up and his face opened to scream, but then the emotions on his face froze as the strange soulbeast made its way to his head. Flashing red with light, the earthworm began to wriggle as if absorbing something, causing Xing Shu's eyes to start to dim, but....he didn't die straight away!

His eyes dimmed gradually, and then, the light of if he recalled something appeared in them!

Under this strange and horrifying situation, Xing Shu's face continued to remain blank for a good ten minutes before the soulbeast popped out from his forehead. The moment it came out, Xing Shu's eyes dimmed for good as he died. Collapsing to the ground, his head made a hollow sound when it hit the ground—his brain had been entirely devoured!

The white-robed elder had his eyes closed when his soulbeast drilled into Xing Shu's mind. It appeared as though he was sensing something from Xing Shu, and from the movements within his sleeves....it could be seen that the tail of the earthworm soulbeast was connected with his arm!

The other end of its tail had tunneled into his body!

After a while, the elder opened his eyes with a pensive look. "It's not here in the Xing compound, then....does Xing Qiuhong have it?" He turned to the south.

"This information has to be false. It can't be verified, but if the headmaster sends me to verify it, then I will do what I must. I just need to find that Xing Qiuhong...."

Not a single living person was left in the courtyard as the elder muttered to himself. The Xing was completely and utterly dead!

The 'black lines' that had killed everyone in the courtyard had already returned to his body. At a closer glance, one could see that these black lines were....a group of bees flying about!

There had to be at least a hundred of them. Each one a pitch-black color with just two red dots on their heads—that was their eyes. Even more terrifying was that each one of them were soulbeasts....and each of them were early-stage class five soulbeasts!

Now that all the flying insects were back, the elder looked around once more to confirm that no one was left living. With a wave of his hand, the hundred flying insects disappeared without a trace, including the purple and black six-tailed giant cat!

What this situation meant was....this man was from the Beast Taming School!

And after he stored away the soulbeasts, his body lit up with a green light and his robes started to sway as if being blown by a gentle wind. Levitating up into the air with his hands behind his

back, he 'flew' away!

This wasn't stepping into the air using elemental energy as platforms, this was the ability of flight!

This man was a Soul King!

This man was the fourth elder of the Beast Taming School, Huang Lin!

.....

A little off the main roads from Ventia City, in a small clearing.

There lied a small forest. Right now, Bai Yunfei was sitting next to a tree with a campfire in front of him cooking his supper.

Whether it was him or his two soulbeasts, the three of them were feeling a little tired from their previous battle. It wasn't fatigue brought by physical activities, but from their soulforce being used. They needed to replenish the amount of soulforce they had, so the three of them were eating three times their normal amounts while star gazing to their hearts content.

Now that all his worries from the Xing were gone, Bai Yunfei felt himself at ease. He didn't stay in the area for long and left it after saying goodbye to Yue Feng. After some time, he stopped for the night.

Aside from the fact that Ventia City had a little more trouble than he was used to, it wasn't too bad for Bai Yunfei. If anything, Xiao Qi and Xiao Lan both received quite a decent amount of 'benefits'.

After finishing their meal, Bai Yunfei took out a space ring into his hands.

After the matter with the Xing, he obtained at least ten of their space rings. After checking each one, Bai Yunfei hadn't noticed anything good.

This was how the soul cultivator world worked. When people fought, not only did one lose their lives, they lost their items. The

‘spoils of war’ system was common sense in this world, so many soul cultivators wouldn’t put their most valuable objects in their space ring when they ventured out. This rang especially true for those part of a school or huge family.

This time, Bai Yunfei was looking at the rings of Xing Luo, Xu Shen, and Wu Ming. After that came Xing Qiufeng, Xing Qiugu, and then Xing Qiuhong.

Looking through the ring with his soulsense, Bai Yunfei noticed one item that was peculiar and took it out. It was a pointy purple dagger.

This was the same dagger Xing Luo used to try and kill him.

Equipment Grade: Low Earth
Elemental Affinity: Lightning
Attack: 550
Upgrade Requirement: 90 Soulpoints

An ordinary soul armament.

“Looks like the poison was applied to it and not an equipment effect....” Bai Yunfei lost interest in the dagger. That poison had been extremely terrifying if it could immediately poison and kill a Soul Ancestor. What effects it would have on a Soul Exalt or higher was unknown to him, but it would surely deal a decent amount of harm, but only if it connected. The most important thing was that the poison didn’t originate from the dagger and would go away with each use. With Bai Yunfei’s current strength, a dagger like this was for the most part useless.

Continuing to look through the space ring, Bai Yunfei saw plenty of things, but nothing worth mentioning.

There were gold, primal stones, soulgems, and soul armaments, but nothing that Bai Yunfei really thought stood out. Not even a single high-earth soul armament was to be had, the highest grade primal stones were low-tier, and the soulgems weren’t high quality

either.

At last that left only Xing Qihong's space ring to be looked through.

The golden axe Xing Qihong used in his battle had been a high-earth tier soul armament. But unfortunately, it had been destroyed by Xiao Qi when it used its Spatial Edge on it.

Fortunately, there was still several other goodies to be had in the ring for sure.

But before Bai Yunfei could start looking through it, his head jerked upwards.

Up in the night sky, there was a man with a golden mask stepping through the skies to him!

Chapter 500: Fighting Yao Tong Again (Third)

The moment Bai Yunfei sensed someone was approaching, he sucked in a sharp breath, “Someone else from the Xing?!”

But then when he saw the person coming over, his eyes widened in shock, “It’s him!” He thought.

He had seen this person before!

It was six years ago, but Bai Yunfei came across this man with a strange golden mask before!

Back in Stonegroove City where he met Jing Mingfeng, this man had chased after him!

At that time, Bai Yunfei had nearly lost his life in the stone forest outside the city. It was only with Jiang Fan’s timely assistance that he was able to escape. (Refer to Chapter 103 for more details)

Bai Yunfei never imagined that he’d meet the same man again six years later.

But while he was thinking to himself about the surprise, the man was already descending down to the ground a few hundred meters away.

.....

Yao Tong stared at Bai Yunfei, his eyes flashing with light from behind his mask. There was also a curious look when he took in the sights of the two soulbeasts with him.

Of course, he didn’t recognize Bai Yunfei. Too much time had already passed for that. The opposite wasn’t true for Bai Yunfei since Yao Tong had left a deep impression on him.

But what Yao Tong was doing was observing Bai Yunfei.

Bai Yunfei stood up to stare back. He didn’t know what the man

was after, but he clearly wasn't here on good business, as he was already in a fighting stance.

“Hand over Xing Qiuhong's space ring and your life will be spared.”

The man spoke after a long period of silence.

Bai Yunfei lifted an eyebrow—how ‘arrogant’ this man was!

This man was a late-stage Soul Exalt, meaning he felt himself confident in his odds against a mid-stage Soul Exalt. There was also the other two soulbeast with Bai Yunfei to consider. Xiao Qi was a mid-stage class six, and Xiao Lan was a late-stage class six. So Bai Yunfei found it very strange that the man was so confident in his chances.

“He...must have a strong soulbeast with him that makes him think he can win....” Bai Yunfei guessed.

And as if proving Bai Yunfei's guess, a gold streak of light flew up into the air behind Yao Tong like a shining meteor to land upon his right shoulder.

It was a gold colored swift!

“What a rare soulbeast—a golden swift! And a....peak late-stage class six one!” Bai Yunfei's eyes widened as he identified the soulbeast. This surely had to be the soulbeast Yao Tong was contracted with, it was stronger than Yao Tong himself!

The golden swift was a soulbeast even rarer than the blue-eyes wyrm and thunderfire wolf. It had only one element, but its speed wouldn't lose out to even those training in the wind element. It couldn't change its size either, but with its small body and great speed, it could fly straight and true another person's body like an arrow.

Bai Yunfei's mood grew slightly grim at the appearance of the golden swift. He didn't know if his senses were dulled due to the previous battle, but Bai Yunfei had the distinct feeling that this

person would be a lot harder to beat than Xing Qiuhong....

When Bai Yunfei didn't grace him with a response for ten seconds, Yao Tong's eyes hardened. His right hand extended outwards, a golden sword appearing in his hand.

"I'll just have to kill you and take the ring from you then."

Bai Yunfei had been trying to think of why this man would want Xing Qiuhong's space ring so much, but time had not permitted him to think any longer. He couldn't look at what was so special about the ring either since he had to deal with this guy before he could do it.

Since his opponent was now ready to fight, Bai Yunfei saw no reason to not prepare either. His Fire-tipped Spear and Cataclysmic Seal appeared in his hand and above him in a flash of light.

Xiao Qi and Xiao Lan prepared to fight as well.

The golden swift on Yao Tong's shoulder chose then to let out a screech before flying forward!

Quickly too!

Bai Yunfei was completely caught off guard by its speed! It beat his Flash Step by a good margin in speed!

He had been prepared for movement, but the speed at which the bird was flying at was nearly too fast for Bai Yunfei to see completely as it shot at him!

It was almost easier to say the golden swift had transformed into a golden bullet to shoot Bai Yunfei through the heart!

Bai Yunfei was confident that even with his armor, the golden swift would be strong enough to break through it and him!

It was a good thing he had the Cataclysmic Seal!

As fast as the golden swift could fly, a single thought travels even faster. Before the bird could get to Bai Yunfei, the Cataclysmic Seal

had already erected a barrier to protect Bai Yunfei as he moved to the left.

“Crash!!”

Like the shattering of glass, Bai Yunfei was astounded to see his earth barrier stop the golden swift for just a brief moment before shattering into pieces!

He hadn't put in the maximum amount of soulforce, sure, but that didn't take away from how terrifyingly strong the swift was!

Not even decreasing in speed, the golden swift blew past Bai Yunfei's waist and cut at his soul armor, leaving behind a gash in it!

The golden swift's first attempt had failed to kill Bai Yunfei, and now the favor was being returned with a giant tail to hit it!

The blue-eyes wyrm had calculated the golden swift's flight path and swung its tail accordingly. When it seemed like it would connect, the golden swift amazingly swerved out of the way and evaded the wyrm's tail!

There was an angry trill as Xiao Qi launched itself at the swift, its wings glowing azure and violet to chase it down!

A pre-emptive strike like the one done by the golden swift had signaled the start of the battle brilliantly. Bai Yunfei had only just a moment to himself after the blow when he saw a gleam of golden light in front of him—Yao Tong was already in front of him with his golden longsword ready to stab Bai Yunfei through the throat!

Yao Tong's speed was just as fast as Bai Yunfei's Flash Step!

Narrowing his eyes, Bai Yunfei brought his Fire-tipped Spear up to defend against the sword. Clashing with each other, Bai Yunfei kicked against the ground to bring him several meters away from Yao Tong.

As Yao Tong was about to chase after him, he suddenly leapt to

his right, abandoning the chase just in time for the blue-eyes wyrm's tail to sail through the area where his head had once been!

Given this reprieve, Bai Yunfei extended his hand towards the Cataclysmic Seal. The fireseed in it popped out, and then into his chest.

Fighting this man as a mid-stage Soul Exalt would be pointless, he had to enter the 'coil' form!

“Eh?”

Bai Yunfei's sharp increase in strength elicited a small gasp from Yao Tong, but he didn't falter in his movements. In another burst of speed, he flew at Bai Yunfei again with his sword ready to pierce Bai Yunfei's forehead this time!

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